

**COLE & ROGERS**  
COMBINED SHOWS



## March-April 1977





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### THE MONTH'S COVER

This delightful lithograph was used by the Cole & Rogers Combined Shows during the last season the title was used, 1936. This was the next to last year Elmer Jones toured a two car circus, 1934. The litho is a stock design from Erie Litho Company, however it has been individualized by special art work on the title. The Cole & Rogers title was first used by J. Augustus Jones in 1905 and 1906. Elmer Jones used the title in 1911, 1928, 1929 and 1934. lon.

### CIRCUS HALL OF FAME 1977 AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The Circus Hall of Fame, Sarasota, Florida, inducted five new members during a ceremony on February 4, 1977, held in connection with the CHS convention. G. Herb Garrido, general manager of the Hall of Fame, announced the 1977 selections just prior to a special performance of the Hanneford Family Circus.

Only one of the five living, Charles Moroski, famed horse trainer on Ringling-Barnum, was present to receive his certificate.

Other awards went to the following. William P. Hall (1895-1932), operated the

William P. Hall Circus in 1905 and was perhaps America's best known dealer and broker of circus horses, elephants and equipment, operating the Hall farm in Lancaster, Missouri. George Hanneford, Sr. (1895-1972), equestrian and trainer of the Hanneford riding act, a center ring attraction of circuses for some 50 years. Floyd King (1899-1976), circus owner and dean of America circus agents. Massimiliano Truzzi (1903-1974), an outstanding juggler who came to America to be featured with Ringling-Barnum in 1940.

The awards other than Mr. Moroski's were received by a family member or a member of the Circus Hall of Fame awards committee.

### NEW MEMBERS

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5618 W. Encanto  
Phoenix, Arizona 85035

Jack Albee #2310  
611 Washinton  
Covington, Ind. 47932

William A. Rector #2091 (Reinstate)  
379 Lake Meade Dr.  
East Berlin, Pa. 17316

Melanie Marecek #2311  
P.O. Box 2006  
Haines City, Florida 33844

Richard S. Marshall #2312  
2602 Lee Hwy. #B-1  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

James R. Whyte #2313  
1419 5th. St. W.  
Palmetto, Florida 33561

John Still #2314  
366-A Hackett Blvd.  
Albany, New York 12208

Steven Gray Hall #2315  
4520 Commons Dr. #104  
Annandale, Virginia 22003

Donald M. Austern #2316  
American Consulate  
APO New York, New York 09289

Boyd L. Wright #2317  
415 17th. Ave. South  
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201

Dr. Edgar W. Benjamin #2318  
5736 Lake Lucius Dr. S.  
Jacksonville, Florida 32211

Paul T. Richards #2319  
4310 Lori St.  
Suitland, Maryland 20023

Joseph L. Gillson, Jr. #2320  
109 Mullin Rd.  
Hilltop Manor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19809

Alton L. Jones #2321  
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# KICKING SAWDUST IN THE CENTER RING OF MEMORIES

## The Story of J. Augustus Jones and His Circuses

By John C. Kunzog

*The author of this article wrote publicity for the various circuses owned by J. Augustus Jones from 1912 through 1918.*

In the scattered and complex history of the circus, the story of John Augustus Jones and his three brothers has been sedately locked in serpentine coils of the past.

The Golden Age of the circus has been placed in the two decades embracing the period from 1880 to 1900. By the turn of the century there were over 100 circuses showing in the United States. Many were small wagon

shows that laid their routes into the hinterland, bringing amusement variety to small communities surfeited with vapid church socials, school spelling bees, and lawn festivals affairs that were deadly monotonous in their repetitious presentation.

The small wagon shows that boasted the title circus seldom had a menagerie or even an elephant. Only the trick

The midway of the Indian Bill's Wild West Show at Waterbury, Conn., July 4, 1903. This was a 12 car show operated by J. A. Jones. Pfening Collection.

This letterhead used by J. Augustus Jones starting in 1915 was reshaped from a design made up by the U. S. Lithograph Company for the Jones Bros. & Wilson Circus in 1914. The design is very similar to the courier design on the cover. The title is in red outlined in black, the background around the lion and tiger is pale blue. Pfening Collection.

monkey and trick mule, plus clever riding on educated horses provided a surcease from the stereotyped entertainment of small villages. If the show boasted a feminine rider her gown of shimmering silk or velvet made the eyes of the spectators sparkle in admiration and her performance was the delectable frosting on the cake of ecstatic enjoyment, while the quips of clown and ringmaster provided enough mirth material to last sometime.

It was during this era that there was unusual excitement in the early part of 1892 at a farm in Warren County known as the Jones farm, situated in the northwestern sector of Pennsylvania, between the village of Chandlers Valley and the borough of Sugar Grove.

Neighboring farmers and residents made frequent visits to view some of the animals being quartered at the farm not conventional farm animals but beautiful ponies, a couple of mules





and a donkey, that rumor had it were trick animals; plus the magnificent draft horses that caused the blood of viewers to pulsate in envious admiration.

What caused the excitement was the unrefuted story that young John Augustus Jones, who had trouped with a small wagon show for the past decade, was launching a circus of his own.

It was in 1885, when as a young man of 17, he left his home in Chandlers Valley to travel with a small circus with winter quarters at Tidioute, also in Warren County. His knowledge of animals made him an important member of the show.

Like many small units of that period, the show was laced with grift and young Jones learned all the gimmicks as well as becoming a devotee of poker dice.

He was with the show several seasons when it became bogged down in the mud lot of financial distress. Jones, endowed with shrewd business acumen and a propensity for saving his money, was able to be the successful bidder at the foreclosure sale.

With the arrival of a flat-sided and enclosed red wagon to the farm from a wagon maker at Warren the county seat caused the mercury in the thermometer of local public opinion to rise and fall, depending what faction was discussing the matter. When narrated in church circles the mercury plummeted to a low point; it spiraled upward when the opposite side related the event, considering the circus a star in the crown of the small village.

**J. Augustus Jones is shown in a sketch by Nealey Walters. Author's Collection.**



**Jones operated the Buffalo Ranch Wild West during the 1910 season. The photo of a side show opening was taken in Vernon, Texas. Pfening Collection.**

As both sides fanned the rumor blaze with their divergent views they had to agree on one point: the accouchement of a circus was taking place before their very eyes.

Young Jones proved the Horatio Alger theme could take place. Having trouped with a show for seven years, he learned much about the outdoor show business, and now 24 years old he was owner of a small circus.

In early May, 1892 Jones Overland Circus went on tour. First stand was Youngsville, Pa., 7 miles; then Pittsfield, 3 miles, a lumber village; then Garland, 3 miles, then to Grand Valley, 6 miles, an oil town where the show remained a week.

Oil boom towns were a beehive of activity during the daytime, but after dark the only scene of merriment was at the barrooms. Thus the brilliantly lighted circus, which used a style of Drummond illumination, oxygen flame impinged on lime, induced the fortune seekers to attend the show as a break in the chain of vapid dissertations in the saloons. Streets were dark, no sidewalks, no street lights, and women never ventured out at night except on rare occasions and circus night was one of them.

According to Jones, the outstanding display of his first show was a clown skit. A donkey was forced to sit on its haunches and then with much painstaking care, the clown draped a buggy lap robe around the animal, fastening it at the neck with a large blanket safety pin. He placed a horse hat on the animal. (A soft straw hat,

with holes for the ears, placed on horses during summer to protect them from the sun's rays). On this hat had been sewn two large ribbon streamers, which were tied into a large bow. Standing aside to view the animal, the clown scratched his head to denote something was missing. He spied a girl in the seats wearing a flower (a plant of course) and requested the flower, which was given to him. He then pinned it on the robe. At this point a man with a violin and one with a flute entered the ring and proceeded to play. The clown began to sing "Wait for the Wagon," with the donkey braying in discordant unison.

While this odd duet was being rendered, another clown entered the ring with a boy's four-wheeled cart, at that time referred to as a wagon, and then proceeded to place in the cart a box marked "200 pounds weight," as a parody to the song being rendered by the odd duet.

The incongruity of the scene, the subtle, silent parody brought howls of delirious delight from men of the oil fields speculators who saw fortunes made and lost in a day.

There was a display of clog dancing, tight rope walking, acrobats, a trick mule that defied anyone to ride him or a trick pony. Other presentations, too, but they challenge the memory.

The sideshow boasted a fire king, snake charmer, Punch and Judy, deformed calf a product of the Jones farm; a magician and a glass blower.

The show laid its route southward through the oil regions, showing only

**Author John C. Kunzog as he looked in 1915 when he was writing publicity for J. Augustus Jones' shows. Author's Collection.**







This small band chariot was used on the 2 car Cole & Rogers during the 1911 season. The show was managed by Elmer Jones, but was owned by J. Augustus and Elmer Jones. Woodcock Collection.

in the smaller towns. It was early November when Jones Overland Circus returned to its winter quarters at Chandlers Valley. Jones was well pleased with his excursion into the circus business as owner.

For several years Jones was out with his wagon show, adding new attractions each season. Success seemed to come natural and he dreamed of a railroad show to enable him to cover new territory. The dream was to be realized, and two railroad cars were ordered. They would be delivered at Pittsburgh, Pa., and the equipment and animals would be shipped to that point.

Yet the fascinating picture of Jones Model Plate Shows suddenly dimmed when on February 18, 1898, the United States battleship Maine was blown up and sank in Havana Harbor, with the loss of several American lives. As the war clouds grew ever darker, Jones was worried. He was too far involved in his new undertaking to turn back, yet failure of the venture could jeopardize the family homestead, as the father had signed notes to help finance his son's enlarged show.

It was on April 25 that the United States declared war on Spain and the call went out for the mustering in of the National Guard and for volunteers for military service. With the ship of state awash by the waves of war, Jones knew this would deplete towns and cities of young men, the potential patrons of a circus. He made a decision to follow them and with consummate care routed his show to towns near training camps at Virginia, Rhode Island, Alabama, Florida and Louisiana.

It was a smart move. Not only were the soliders at encampments hungry for entertainment, but the wives and sweethearts of many soliders had followed their loved ones to towns near camps to be with them until time of embarkation. Quite frequently

soliders would attend the show every day or two to dispel the vapidty of camp life.

Jones knew when a new contingent would arrive, how long they would remain. The show shuttled back and forth between nearby cities and army camps in the southern states.

It is a facet of American history that the Spanish-American War was the only war where men were not drafted into service. The army invading Cuba was composed of the regular army, National Guard and volunteers.

When a nation is at war, every possible source of revenue is taxed to provide revenue. In our war with Spain this was no exception and each circus was taxed \$100.00 and each side show \$30.00 by the federal government. To these taxes each municipality demanded their share, as well as the individual states. These taxes cut into the profits of the shows and forced many small outfits to cancel the season.

*The New York Clipper*, issue of May 7, 1898, gives this information: ROSTER OF J. AUGUSTUS JONES' ONE-RING SHOW

J. Augustus Jones, proprietor and manager. Harry Bubb, advance with two assistants; Mons. Cadieu, bounding wire performer; The Three Grant Brothers, Tom, Los and Charles, comedy Chinese acrobats; Peco and Bosco, singing and talking clowns; The Vanes, double trapeze act; Charles Grane, perpendicular ladder; Tom Boscoe, juggler and clown wire act; Prof. T. J. Watson, leader of band and orchestra with ten musicians: James Carey, Ed. Jones (no relation), Ed. Parker, Robert Caswell, H. M. Kester, Ike Sheeley, Harry Leigh, Bob Cusick, J. R. Stone and Bert Daniels; Concert roster: Ernest Hickok, black face comedian; Edward and Sarah Parker, sketch team; Booth Brothers, batons; E. Colarado, Dutch comedian; Mattie Mora, soubrette; Ben Stanley, tramp monologist. Side show people are: Prof. Teel, magic and ventriloquism; Madam Teel, fortune teller; Sig. Dormento, impalement act; Prof. Jordan, glass blower; Bessie Day, snake



This pony tableau wagon appeared in the parade of the 1911 Cole & Rogers Circus. Woodcock Collection.

charmer; Will C. Lane, door talker; Dan Daly, master of transportation; Frank Shephard, boss convasman; George Hale, boss property man; Cookhouse in charge of Will Jacoby.

The reader will note that the *Clipper* used J. Augustus Jones instead of John. For some reason Jones had an aversion to the name John and preferred to be known as J. Augustus, which form he had established as his legal signature.

Because of restricted space, Jones had taken a page from circus history and returned to the use of flat-sided wagons. These were not the familiar red baggage wagons, but were smaller and painted white with red trim, while on the sides and back, in beautiful colors, were allegorical or historical scenes. The custom of using this style wagon was dying out as Jones was bowing into the show business. A semi-retired scenic painter from Geneva, Ohio, Stanley Lewis, was engaged for the work. (It is quite probable that this artist did work for Walter L. Main when that show used such equipment.) Washington Crossing the Delaware, Battle of Lexington and similar scenes were delineated, care being taken not to depict any battles of the recent War of Rebellion lest it fan the blaze of hatred. For behind the curtain of pleasantries of southerners lay the raw wou for the damyankees, which in the South was one word.

These wagons were used in the parade, which was a must for all shows. Yet as the vehicles rolled over the southern roads it was evident that Jones had capitulated to the South. At the top of the wagons at each corner was an American flag while between them sides and back, was a Confederate flag. At that period this was not too unusual. Many business places had both the Stars and Stripes and the Stars and Bars on the same flag pole, the former, of course, at the top. Jones was out to make money and welcomed



the dollars from Southerners as well as others. He also had given stern orders to all workers to ignore any slurs about Yankees that any Southern hothead might make.

Nearly the entire circus personnel took part in the parade. Grooms and roustabouts were attired in colorful long coats, their boots sparkling from an application of beef tallow and lampblack. Feminine members rode horseback sidesaddle, gowned in shimmering gowns. Each wagon was pulled by a double span of horses to enhance the effect.

Lacking the needed railroad facilities, Jones always rented a carriage and team in which he and his wife, Martha, rode leading the parade. All horses were gaily caparisoned in red, white and blue plumes and many times the wheel spokes were entwined with bunting. With his heart keeping tempo with the music from the circus band J. Augustus Jones led the procession and paraded into the pages of circus history.

His first railroad season was successful. As the New Year of 1899 made its bow for recognition, Jones still was out showing under southern skies.

The signing of the peace treaty on December 10, 1898, put a pin in the bubble of prosperity that the nation had been enjoying. Cancellation of war contracts created much unemployment, but the pinch was not felt too much until late 1899. Jones was able to operate profitably. He had no menagerie to eat up the proceeds of the ticket wagon and was able to route the show where he received good patronage.

The year 1900 was presidential election year. William McKinley was seeking re-election on the Republican ticket; William Jennings Bryan headed the Democratic ticket, and in the early part of the year the political pot was boiling.

The Republicans campaigned on the slogan of "Full Dinner Pail." It was a heated campaign but it made money for Jones by taking some of the "slush funds" of the Republican party. There was a campaign cry that went:

"McKinley rides a carriage,  
Roosevelt rides a rig,  
Stevenson rides a nanny goat  
While Bryan rides a pig."

This was worked into a clown skit. Clowns supposedly representing McKinley and Roosevelt in horse-drawn vehicles, followed by a clown in a cart drawn by a goat, then a clown in a cart drawn by a pig. This procession circled the hippodrome track while the band played patriotic selections. It brought howls of delight from spectators, for the inference to the quatrain was readily apparent.

In many places the local Republicans augmented the circus parade by having a column following



**Brother Elmer managed the 2 car show using the King & Tucker title during the 1908 to 1912 seasons. A bill stand for that show is pictured here. Pfening Collection.**

the circus parade. These marchers invariably carried a tinplate dinner pail, the emblem of the campaign. They were not part of the circus parade, merely part of the circus scene.

Whether it was the "slush fund" or honest profits, the fact remains that a Pullman car was ordered and in 1902 another show was launched, Cole & Rogers, to be managed by Elmer Jones, a brother.

The country was getting back into the realm of prosperity. Theodore Roosevelt was President, having been sworn in following the assassination of McKinley. The Buffalo Bill Wild West and other frontier shows were proving popular. J. Augustus Jones planned a Wild West show. It was titled Indian Bill's Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome. The show opened the season at McKees Rocks, Pa. on April 22, 1903. It was enthusiastically received.

When Jones launched his Wild West show there was one person whose guiding hand did much to make the venture a success: Chief Rolling Thunder, a Seneca Indian of the Allegheny Indian Reservation, Steamburg, N.Y. His Americanized name was Lewis Newell. Chief Rolling Thunder was no newcomer to the show scene. For many years he had his own

medicine show. He knew what booking agencies to contact for the needed talent. Most of the Indians were of the Seneca Nation and were under the supervision of an Indian named Ken-jockey, also of the reservation.

Chief Rolling Thunder was mentor to Jones for many years and was a familiar figure at Warren. At all stands he had a tent on the grounds where he vended his medicine, Kiowa, a tonic; Wisheta Rub, a liniment in solid form. There also was an item called Circus Oil, that promised its users to have supple limbs like the athletes on the show.

A *New York Clipper* item said:

"Indian Bill's Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome played Waterbury (Conn.) on July 4, three days after Barnum and Bailey's Show, and turned people away at both performances. Actual number of paid admissions for both performances was 14,320. Side show receipts over \$800.00 for the day. Bill Brainard reported big business in Oriental Annex. He has five genuine Arabian dancing girls and four Arabian musicians."

An item in the *Clipper* later in the season (Nov. 14, 1903) reads:

"Indian Bill's Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome, J. Augustus Jones, sole owner and manager. Show opened at McKees Rocks, Pa. April 22. Closed at Fairmount, W. Va. October 3. Shipped to winter quarters Clifton Forge, Va. All one-day stands. Used 28 railroads, traveled 8,000 miles.

"Equipment: Three sleepers, five flats, three stocks, one advertising car, 100 head of stock and 200 people.

"This was Mr. Jones first season in

**A coach from the train of the 1914 Jones Bros. & Wilson Trained Wild Animal Shows. Pfening Collection.**





handling a large show, but proved a good manager as season very successful. Mr. Jones also owns and operates the Model Plate Show, best equipped two-car show in America. This show now in South and will remain out all winter."

A big feature was Indian Bill's Mexican Band, whose music delighted many and brought cries of "encore."

While the railroad cars and contents were on trackage at Clifton Forge, Va., the draft horses and other animals were shipped to the Jones farm at Chandlers Valley, Pa., for the winter.

Another Jones brother had joined the show, Aleck. Also deserving special mention was another employee, Harry P. Bowman, who served as ticket seller. Bowman authored a book published in 1942, "As Told on a Sunday Run."

By 1904 four more cars were added to the smaller unit and the name changed to Cole and Rogers Railroad Shows. At the close of the Northern tour the show was reduced to two cars to play the South for the winter. But as this truncated Cole and Rogers Show moved southward it encountered quarantine problems. Yellow fever was scourging many sections. Health officials were checking records of where the circus had showed for the last 60 days.

Elmer was in charge of the show and was familiar with these quarantine regulations. He showed in towns free of the disease so as to have a "clean bill of health." In October he showed in North Carolina, Virginia, Alabama and Georgia, missing only a few dates. The virulence of the epidemic was subsiding as he moved farther south.

Today few persons know the reason for such a two-car circus. Yet it was these small units that brought a respite from the monotony of drudgery that was the anathema of toilers in cotton and tobacco fields. These shows were a bright spot in their lives, their only entertainment except the occasional traveling drama. The movies were still in the future for most isolated towns.

Elmer Jones related of the stark poignancy of youngsters. Girls were dressed in burlap or heavy cotton grain bags, more times than not with only a hole cut out for the head and slits at the sides for armholes. Boys wore pants fashioned out of flour or grain bags, sometimes contrasting remnants of two bags used in a single pair of pants.

"Hell," said Elmer, "you had to be made of stone not to feel sorry for them. Their birthright was hard work from infancy to the grave, and heartaches all through life."

"The South," continued Elmer, "was a section of contrasts. It could best be likened as a woman dressed in silks and finery. She was the city. But lift her silken skirt and her petticoat of poverty, tattered and dirty, became visible.

They were the raiment of the farm worker, the sharecropper, the cotton-chopper.

"While city folks were riding in carriages drawn by sleek horses, the rural dweller was ambling along in a wagon with dish-shaped wheels, frequently pulled by a mule and a cow hitched together."

The circus was a magnet for young and old alike, the posters beckoning them to save their pennies for the big day. The circus always had a band, and as a canvas tent cannot muffle the music, young and old who just couldn't pay the nominal admission price, would gather outside in a nearby field and in jubilant frenzy dance as the music was wafted through the air.

Many times admission was free-made possible by civic-minded organizations. If not, Elmer Jones, to his ever-lasting credit, had some workers pass out special admission tickets to misfortune's favorites. As they entered the tent they were directed to a section in the rear, in the South facetiously referred to as "Nigger Heaven." It was still the period of segregation and the "poor whites" sat on one end of the section, the Negroes on the other.

It was Elmer Jones who related of extra-curricular activities of troupers doing "something not down on the bills," while playing in the Deep South. Love knows no region or season. It blooms in wheat fields of the North as well as in the Cotton Belt. But the learned Northern swain could transcribe his own love missives, but the unschooled Southern cotton-chopper or hoe-boy, who left school at 10, may have a hard struggle to indite a love letter. Spelling was not his forte.

So Southern lovers of both sexes often sought the help of circus folk to write a love letter "fancy like" that they could mail to their heart throb. They had the letter sheet and matching

envelope that was purchased at the village store for one cent. Few persons had need for a full box of stationery consisting of 24 sheets and 24 envelopes which sold for ten cents. They bought one sheet and one envelope for one cent.

This they would take to the circus before show time, single out the person they believed would heed their plea and request them to write the missive. If it were a young man he would ask a man; if it were a girl who wanted the letter written, she would try to contact a woman. There were few stands in the deep South where such a request was not made. Not only was the request always granted, but the show always put the necessary two-cent stamp on the envelope; otherwise it might be several weeks before the lovelorn would be able to get the funds for postage.

Circus personnel were contacted because they wouldn't "talk." This also applied to those performing in the theatre. They were in town for only a short period. Traveling salesmen were frequently approached for the same reason. And those traveling in the South understood the situation and readily consented to help Dan Cupid. The clerks in the store could be entrusted with some letters but love missives were sacrosanct.

In its issue of April 7, 1906 the Billboard carried this story:

"The Indian Bill's Wild West and the Cole and Rogers Shows have been combined under the title of Jones Enormous Shows, under the personal direction and ownership of J. Augustus Jones. The winter quarters at Verona, Pa. (10 miles from Pittsburgh) is a scene of activity. Mr. Jones now is in the West to purchase 40 head of heavy draft horses. Show will consist of 16 cars with one car and a box brigade in advance."

Jones acquired a western style stage coach for the show to dramatize an Indian attack with its resulting gunfire, flaming arrows and thrilling horsemanship. Theodore Roosevelt was President at that time and Jones

**The 15 car Jones Bros. World Toured Circus in 1915 used this former Barnum & Bailey corner statue cage in its parade. Pfening Collection.**





# CENTRAL FALLS, Friday, July 9




## JONES BROS

WORLD-TOURED

## SHOWS

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**WILD ANIMAL**

**CIRCUS**

1000 People and Horses

100 Feature Acts

40 Clowns

12 Acres of Tents

Seats for 10,000 People

**TWICE DAILY, 2 and 8 P.M.**

**DON'T MISS THE BIG**

**FREE STREET PARADE at 10 A.M. Daily**

**Prices Reduced to 25 Cents**  
**FOR THIS DAY ONLY**

This newspaper ad was used by the Jones show in 1915. However the city does not agree with the listing in the season route sheet. Pfening Collection.

capitalized on that fact by having Rough Riders re-enact the Battle of San Juan Hill. The show continued for four years, with the title being changed to Cole & Cooper in 1908 for part of the season. Elmer had on the road the two-car circus under the titles of West & Wells, King & Tucker, Coulter & Coulter Dog and Pony Show for the years 1907-09 respectively.

The next change in title came in 1910 when the wild west theme again was emphasized. The new title being Jones Brothers Buffalo Ranch and Wild West. For the first time another brother, Richard T., was mentioned. This made

four of the six Jones brothers actively engaged in the show business.

J. Augustus Jones frequently made trips to his home. He was leading stockholder and a director of Forest Furniture Manufacturing Co., of Youngsville, as well as director of the First National Bank of that borough; he also was director of the Warren Savings Bank. These and other business duties made him absent from the show, but he made sure that there was always a Jones in the ticket wagon.

When Jones went to rails he incurred an expense that irked him the cost of trackage for the railroad cars when the season closed. Not only was it an expense, the weather elements wreaked havoc on the painted cars.

It was in 1907 that a narrow gauge railroad was built from Youngsville, Pa. to Sugar Grove, Pa. a line that passed within three-quarters of a mile of the Jones farm at Chandlers Valley. The line had the third rail which allowed for the hauling of standard gauge cars.

The plat was like a triangle with North Warren and Warren at the apex, a leg nine miles south to Youngsville, then another leg of 10 miles north to Sugar Grove, and the base of 13 miles from Sugar Grove to North Warren without rail facilities. The Jones farm was in this triangle.

Each season Jones quartered his horses on the farm and at the start of the season the animals were walked to North Warren where they were kept in a field, protected from the elements by a tent, until the entire herd had then loaded on a train. The Dunkirk, Allegheny Valley and Pittsburgh Railroad operated through North Warren, Warren and Youngsville. This same procedure had to be followed at the close of the season.

Jones conceived a spur track to the farm and running the entire circus train into the sheds there. The roadbed

**This is the cookhouse on the Jones Bros. World Toured Circus in 1915. Burt Wilson Collection.**



would not sustain a 20-car loaded circus train but would carry a 7-car unit. Thus in less than a day the entire show train and animals could be at the DAV&P siding ready for the annual tour. As it now was, it required more than a day to just get the horses to the railroad.

The story of the Jones brothers and their circus titles cannot be properly told without relating the early days of Cole Brothers Circus. They are so closely interlocked that the history of one show cannot be told without alluding to the other.

In 1902 J. Augustus Jones launched the Cole and Rogers Railroad Circus. The name "Cole" had appeared in circus titles for nearly a century and made showmen look favorably on the title.

In 1906 at Erie, Pa., another show with a Cole title was born, The Great Cole Brothers United Shows, and the lithographs depicted three Cole brothers. The title had its origin at the Erie Lithograph Co., one of the big show print houses at that time. Not only did Erie Litho produce exceptionally beautiful paper for the show, but at Harborcreek, ten miles east of Erie, they had constructed barns and necessary track facilities for wintering a 20-car outfit.

The lithographs were the acme of perfection of the lithographer's art: handsome male performers to set feminine hearts a flutter; equestriennes delineated in short skirts and tight bodices, a magnet to intrigue the young blades; graceful animals from foreign lands to thrill the young; beautiful horses in riding and draft categories to be admired and envied by rural residents.

Erie Lithograph believed in boosting the city of Erie. A circus wintering in that area would put a lot of money into circulation. Sparked with such civic pride and enterprise the title was not offered to any small operator.

Martin J. Downs, of Toronto, Canada, who had the Sells and Downs title, viewed the beautiful lithos of a non-existent show and drooled. The title was intriguing. Downs was successful in leasing both the show title and the winter facilities. As the show moved out of Birmingham, Ala., in 1906, where it wintered, the name of Sells and Downs became history and went on tour as The Great Cole Brothers United Shows.

For three years Downs had the title on the road and made money. It was in 1908 while viewing animals in the horse tent at Grove City, Pa., that he was kicked in the thigh by a fractious steed. Later he was taken to a Toronto hospital. Blood poisoning set in that could not be checked and in August, 1909, one leg was amputated in hopes of preventing further spread of the disease.

In 1909 the circus was under the





This small tableau on Jones Bros. in 1915 had been on the Campbell Bros. Circus earlier. Burt Wilson Collection.

direction of E. E. Goodell. The circus gave its closing performance on Saturday, October 9 and then headed for its winter quarters. In the meantime the crew at Harborcreek had been busy making arrangements for winter. Inclement weather prevented the crew from tarring the roof, but the needed hay, straw and grain had been stored and the necessary repairs completed. Saturday, October 9, was a mild, dry day and the crew began to pitch the roof, heating the tar in a back room of the huge barn and hoisting the heated material to the roof through a trap door.

Suddenly dense clouds of smoke billowed from the trap door followed by flames. The men rushed from the roof, finding safety by leaping onto a pile of sand that was to be used to cover the tar. Flames reached the bales of straw and within a few moments the entire structure was an inferno and soon a complete loss.

The show train arrived on Monday and as there were no basement barns for the elephants, a tent was erected, while a search was made for suitable winter quarters. A committee from the Corry (Pa.) Fair and Driving Association called upon E. E. Goodell offering to rent the Corry fair grounds buildings. Their proposition was accepted and the show train and all animals moved to that town, 36 miles from Erie.

On October 19, 1909 Martin J. Downs died in a Toronto hospital. The executors of the estate commissioned Fiss, Doerr & Carroll Horse Co., of New York City, purported to be the largest dealers in horses in the world, to sell the entire circus property. The sale was held at Corry January 28, 1910. Many showmen attending the sale expected the title to be offered, but it did not belong to Downs, it was only leased to him.

The title was not out in 1910 but the following year W. H. Coulter leased the title and had it for 1911-1912 and lost his financial shirt. J. Augustus Jones

got the title for 1913. Circus historians will recall that this was the year of the Buffalo Bill Shows debacle. Harry Wilson, who for years had the side show and also an animal act, found himself "at liberty" in August. He had assiduously saved his money through the years and was ready to become a circus owner. Many of the shows on the road had dubious records as money makers, but in J. Augustus Jones he found an operator who never had a bad season. Jones took Wilson on a tour of his farm and outlined plans for building winter quarters at the Jones farm by constructing a three-quarter mile spur track to the farm. Wilson half-heartedly approved but he wanted action now.

Jones had leased the Cole title for that season, but Wilson, it seemed, wanted his name "in lights" so to speak and the outfit went out as Jones Brothers and Wilson and at the end of a short season the outfit wintered in Norfolk, Va.

The draft horses were shipped to the Jones farm. Many persons don't know why early circuses wintered in the North. Draft horses were vitally important in the operation of a circus. But if these animals are taken too far south they lose their zest for labor and contract the heaves when put to heavy work. Not only that, but the animals must be exercised every day. At the Jones farm these horses were leased to boroughs for snowplow and street work, to operators of sugar camps and for general teaming. Jones refused to

This envelope design was used by John C. Kunzog, press representative of the J. Augustus Jones Cole Bros. Circus in 1916. Author's Collection.

N E W S  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FROM  
**COLE BROS. CIRCUS**  
AND MAMMOTH MENAGERIE

JOHN C. KUNZOG, PUBLICITY  
307 MADISON AVENUE WARREN, PA.



The midway of the Jones Bros. Circus is pictured here during the 1915 season. The pit show on the left contained Lottie, the fat girl. Burt Wilson Collection.

rent horses for use in lumber camps or oil fields. Sleighride parties were popular at that period and the Jones farm furnished the horsepower. What animals were not working were exercised by village youngsters. It is not generally known today, but horses must be taken out of the stable and exercised each day. If kept in their stalls they will become afflicted with agoraphobia a morbid fear of open spaces and it becomes almost impossible to get them to leave their stalls. Everyone has heard the term "Hobson's choice." Hobson operated a livery stable in England and hired out horses. But patrons had no choice of animal but had to accept the horse nearest the stable door. Hobson, it appears, understood the traits of horses and while he was laughed at and added a term to our language that means "no choice" he managed to get his animals exercised.

Wilson had a leopard act and with animals to feed he was induced to accept engagements in Virginia while he and Jones were putting the finishing touches on a 20-car show for the 1914 season.

Getting good acts was a task. The war in Europe prevented importation of performers while topflight acts in this country, not under contract, were flocking to the West Coast. The Panama Pacific Exposition had an insatiable maw for both headline and mediocre presentations.

Unemployment was serious in early 1914. New York City had the longest bread lines ever known. The submarine blockade prevented the shipping of American cotton to England's textile mills and Americans were urged to buy a bale of cotton to help the starving South.

After a short invasion of Ohio in May the Jones Brothers and Wilson Shows swung back into Pennsylvania mining regions and then followed the harvest circuit of the Midwest. The season closed at Parsons, (Kan.) in October.



The draft horses were shipped to the Jones farm while the show train was routed to Hot Springs (Ark.) for the winter.

Hot Springs was teeming with night life at that period. Many went there for health reasons; others for financial. It was the hot spot of the nation for gambling in all forms as well as diversified forms of entertainment. Wilson was exhibiting his cat act.

In March, 1915, Jones Brothers & Wilson's Shows left winter quarters at Hot Springs, yet by midsummer there was a dissolution of partnership. Harry Wilson launched a new show under the title of Cook & Wilson's Wild Animal Circus. His route was in the industrial east where factories were busy on European war contracts. At the end of the season the show wintered at Trenton (N.J.)

In 1916 the Cook & Wilson show was making a stubborn stand in the East. An infantile paralysis epidemic was becoming serious. In many places schools were closed which was followed by a ban on any child under 16 years from attending shows or public gatherings. Owners of movie houses screamed to high heaven while the absence of children also plagued tent shows.

Wilson cut prices at many stands a foolish move. Those who could go, would have attended at regular price, while price concession still would not enable children to attend.

Incessant rain bedeviled the circus with mud lots daily. The unusual weather condition was blamed on the booming guns on the European war front. In March the National Guard was mustered into service to entrain for the West to fight Pancho Villa, the Mexican bandit, thus further depleting the East of potential patrons.

Cook & Wilson was billed to show at Albany (N.Y.) in August. The city and its environs truly were "billed like a circus." It was estimated that \$2,-000.00 were expended in billing and newspaper space. Then the jinx that haunted Wilson all season struck. The infantile paralysis epidemic became more virulent and as a precautionary measure against spreading of the disease the circus permit was cancelled. Two days later, at Walton (N.Y.) the circus folded. It was the final season.

In early November Wilson, with his leopard act, sailed for Havana, Cuba, for a 20-week engagement at the Santos y Artigas Circus. The animals were the only thing Wilson salvaged from his venture.

Following dissolution of partnership with Wilson, Jones resumed the Cole title and remained west of the Mississippi River and again wintered at Hot Springs. He opened the 1916 season at that place in late March. He was in a strategic position to garner military money when the United States Army, under command of

**COLE BROS. WORLD-TOURED SHOWS**

**3 RINGS MENAGERIE STAGES** **3 TRAINS OF CARS** **COMBINED EXHIBITIONS** **ROMAN RACE COURSE**

**1000-MEN, WOMEN AND HORSES-1000**

20 CONTORTIONISTS  
20 TUMBLERS  
40 ATHLETES  
40 GYMNASTS  
20 EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

500 HEAD OF HORSES  
100 RARE WILD ANIMALS  
ACRES OF TENTS  
10,000 SEATING CAPACITY  
HUGE SPECTACULAR THEATRIUM

CLOWNS 41  
EQUESTRIANS 20  
AERIALISTS 30  
LEAPERS 20

**Rare and Complete Zoological Collection,**

Five Tents of Thoroughbred Horses Free for Inspection at all times.  
**Superb Educated Equine Exhibition.**  
**High School Menage Horses of unprecedented proficiency.**

**MAGNITUDE, MERIT AND MODERNISM.**  
United for Educating and Entertaining.

STUPENDOUS, GLITTERING MODERN, KALEIDOSCOPIC **STREET PARADE** WILL LEAVE THE GROUNDS AT 10 O'CLOCK AND PASS THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE STREETS.

Over a Mile in Length and brilliant in splendor. This should be seen whether the show is seen or not. Immediately after the parade and again at 6:30 p. m. 10 to be seen.

**THE THRILLING FREE OUTSIDE EXHIBITION**  
On the Show Grounds.

PERFORMANCES AT 8 AND 10 O'CLOCK - FREE - EARLIER - LATER - AT THE SHOW GROUND.

MILE D'IZI  
Immediately after the Parade is the thrilling FREE OUTSIDE EXHIBITION on the show grounds.

1916

This newspaper ad was originally designed by Erie Litho for the 1906 Cole show, and was revived for use during the 1916 tour under Jones. Author's Collection.

General John Pershing, entered Mexico to capture Villa, whose followers had raided a town in New Mexico. The troop movement westward released a lot of cash and the western section was enjoying a small boom.

This air calliope wagon had been remodeled from the small band chariot used by Jones on the Cole & Rogers Show in prior years. This was taken on the Cole Bros. Circus in 1916. Woodcock Collection.



Two years previously economic chaos swept the Cotton Belt as German submarine warfare closed European markets for the crop. Now a poor yield in the eastern cotton fields sent prices soaring to 19 cents a pound. Oklahoma and Texas had bumper crops and Cole Brothers Shows were routed to get their share of cotton dollars. In many stands there were three shows a day - the late one for workers in the cotton fields who were denied time off to attend the early shows.

It was presidential election year. "Preparedness" was the national theme. Woodrow Wilson sought a second term on the slogan: "He kept us out of the war." Winter quarters were at Riverside (Calif.) The late Bob Taber told this writer that Cole Brothers, with J. Augustus Jones in charge, arrived on Saturday, December 11. The following Monday Elmer Jones arrived with the Cooper Brothers shows. Both reported a successful season.

The Cole Bros. World-Toured Shows opened the 1917 season in Riverside on late March 7, using eight seventy foot flat cars, five stock cars and 6 coaches, one in advance. The big top, damaged in a blowdown during a tornado in Arizona the previous season, was replaced by a new top of khaki color. The sideshow tent as well as all other tops of the show were of this new color that had become popular during the Mexican border fight against Villa. The Cole show was the first with the khaki top.

President Wilson was inaugurated for a second term in March. A month later the United States declared war on Germany. The country was in a patriotic ferment and many young men, eager for adventure, crowded recruiting stations to enlist. The first American troops sailed for France in June, the following month the first Liberty Loan was floated.

With the cauldron of patriotic and war fever seething and new government regulatory agencies being continually created, J. Augustus Jones added the patriotic flair to his show. In the parade each horse had a red, white and blue plume on its head. Flags graced the four top corners of each parade chariot, costumes of performers reflected the patriotic motif.

The first draft call was in June 1917. When Jones observed the raw recruits,





**This cross cage with a six pony hitch appeared in the 1916 Cole Bros. parade. Woodcock Collection.**

many fresh from the farms, he searched his soul. How could he approve of wangling money from these lads who were on their way to the warfront? He knew that many would never return.

The new edict started with the ticket wagon no short changing. Vendors going through the seats were to wear caps prominently displaying the price of the commodity and the cautionary note: "Pay no more." The practice of coating copper cents with aluminum paint and having the butchers pass them out as a dime when making change was prohibited. The show did not benefit from this trickery but it had given tacit approval.

Once the most grift-studded show on the road, it suddenly became gyp free. "J.A. has gone Sunday School," whispered some showmen, and shook their heads as though that were a crime.

But the real gambling was carried on in a small enclosure in the horse tent or in the pie car on the siding. The local bloods who cared to pit their luck with the show gamblers were accommodated.

Without question the outstanding display of the 1917 season was that of Charles Gay and Muriel Croft in their presentation of animal subjugation. Following the routine jumping, roll-overs and other tricks, Gay placed his head in a lion's mouth.

Miss Croft presented three lions riding horses, the latter executing maneuvers at word of command to

single file, or three abreast with their feline mounts in the saddle. Leopards also were put through their paces.

But the highlight of the display was the Zoological Pyramid formed by joining two specially constructed ladders, 12 feet in height, with a platform at the top. A large lion with bushy mane ascended one of the ladders to reach the plateau and was followed by Miss Croft. Special board seats were hooked to the two ladders, one above the other. On the left sat four lions; on the right, four leopards.

The band played a patriotic selection, the lights dimmed and red fire on the ground colored the background while overhead showers of colored sparks cascaded upon the group. Gay had his charges on the pyramid in perfect control, as did Miss Croft have control of the lion by holding onto a collar concealed by the animal's mane.

As cats can readily ascend a ladder, coming down is something else. The platform on which Miss Croft and the lion stood had eye bolts at each corner holding chains from a center ring. A rope with a hook was inserted, the ladders parted at the top just enough to allow the platform to descend on a

**The three Jones elephants, Myrtle, Bonnie and Babe are shown in the 1915 Cole parade. Woodcock Collection.**



pulley amid a cascade of brilliant rockets. The animals then were sent to their cages and Miss Croft and Gay acknowledged the plaudits.

Another display with a patriotic motif was that of Miss Irene Eastham "who can sing louder than the band." Sitting on a white horse, her gown of red velvet nicely spread, her jacket of blue with a collar of white ruching completed her ensemble. As she sang patriotic songs, a flock of pigeons were released from various parts of the tent and they alighted upon her or the horse. It was a scene that would never be forgotten. (Miss Eastham also appeared as Irene Kober in the "Three Flying Kobers," aerial artists.)

It was the season for lofty displays which made the Rocky Mountain Goat presentation win approval. These animals walked across a narrow board high overhead without signs of fear.

Plants with war contracts were working overtime, and while unemployment was high the first three months of the year, by July there was a shortage of manpower and circus owners were faced with the problem of keeping workers from deserting the show for higher wages in factories.

Many times the men who erected the tents in the morning had harkened to the siren song of labor scouts and deserted the show to take better paying jobs in factories. Frequently the tear-down was performed by the faithful, assisted by performers, business personnel and local youngsters.

Jones never advertised for help in the trade papers, and very seldom in the local press. When desertions occurred, the hobo jungles, poolrooms and even city jails were scoured for recruits. Both J. Augustus and Elmer prided themselves as judges of character and consistently made good selections. Many times a drunk in city jail viewed the circus proposition as a blessing, yet didn't sober up until a hundred miles from home and it would require some work before he would have sufficient funds to return. In many instances by that time, hard work at the circus helped sweat the liquor out of his system and by the end of the season he was a better man, physically and mentally. Many recruits from the hobo jungles were well satisfied with their choice. They had three square meals a day and acceptable sleeping quarters.

By late 1917 the war picture was grim. Every week thousands of troops sailed for France, shrinking the list of potential circus patrons. The first Liberty Loan was floated in May of that year and J. Augustus Jones planned to invest \$1,000 a week, yet there were several weeks when he failed to meet this quota. Business at the ticket wagon was slowly but steadily dwindling and when Cole Brothers World-Toured Shows pulled into Shreveport (La.) in late November Jones reported



having acquired only \$21,000 in bonds. Cooper Brothers Shows, under the management of Elmer Jones, reached Shreveport a week later. Both shows wintered at the State Fair Grounds.

On December 28, 1917 the government took over operation of the nation's railroads. A month later some shows were feeling the pinch of bureaucratic operation. There were embargoes and countless delays. Troop trains and those moving war material held high priority.

Showmen were worried and meetings were held every week or so. Show owners were urged to contact their Congressmen to help cut the Gordian Knot that held the movement of show trains to the whim of military brass.

Spiraling feed and labor costs induced Jones to auction off all animals of the Cole Show in mid-February, and then kicked himself for not acting sooner to eliminate this egregious expense.

Elmer Jones took out Cooper Brothers and Aleck and Richard Jones used the Hugo title. Both were two-car outfits and entailed no extra engine to move them. They could be coupled to local freight trains and even passenger trains. While the three brothers were out, J. Augustus Jones met with circus operators and analyzed the situation.

In July conditions were changing and circuses again were able to keep their dates. While theatres were being erected at training camps, a circus that was billed near a camp invariably was given top priority in railroad movement.

With this change in the transportation picture Jones planned on putting the Cole title on the road as a 16-car unit, consolidating the two smaller shows and adding new attractions.

Jones planned operating like he did the first year he went on rails: Playing near army camps where the soldiers were hungry for entertainment and also show in Southern cities for the winter months, including the New Orleans Mardi Gras.

Among the acts booked were:

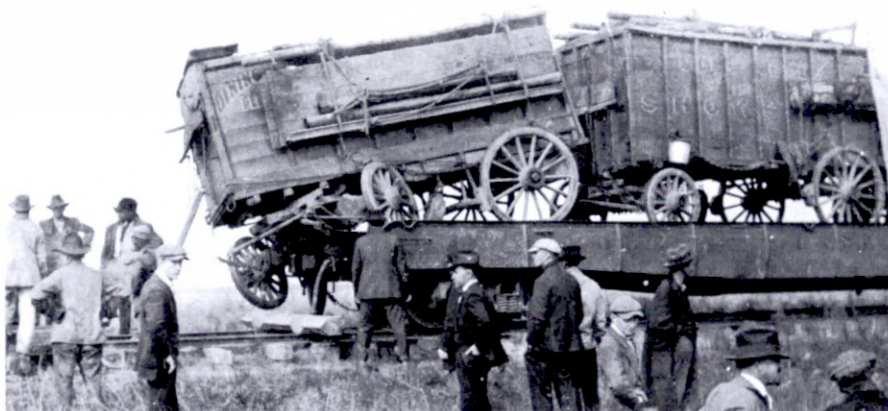
Herr Louis Roth and his \$50,000 group of black-maned African-bred lions. "Most sensational act of its kind before the public."

Mlle. Mable Stark. "Dainty bit of French femininity presenting a mixed group of leopards and panthers. A performance highly applauded in Europe." (Mable Stark was a protegee of Louis Roth).

Madame Rogers and her blue ribbon-winning liberty and waltzing horses, direct from Circus Schuman in Berlin, Germany.

Madame Bertina and her beautiful white Arabian horses in a magnificent equine statuesque display.

The Whitties, eight young ladies in iron-jaw act, climaxing their display



A cookhouse wagon is shown partially off a flat on the Cole show in 1917. Jim Dunwoody Collection.

with the Butterfly Ballet while "swinging in huge arcs in mid-air hanging by their teeth."

Cheerful Gardner and his herd of performing elephants.

Prof. Oise Lucier's performing elephants, including Tex, the largest elephant in this country.

A menagerie comprising exotic animals from all foreign lands.

Prof. Brown's Military Band.

Free mile-long street parade.

More, much more. Traveling on a circus train of 16 steel railroad cars.

As many of the acts he signed still were under contract, Jones planned on opening in September and had the steel railroad cars taken to Aurora (Missouri) where the two small units were to join him.

Elmer had left the Cooper Shows in charge of Dick, while Aleck took charge of the Hugo unit. It was an unwritten rule that one of the Jones brothers would always be with a unit.

The large khaki tops of the Cole

This 1916 billstand shows the colorful Cole Bros. paper made up by the Erle Lithograph Company. Pfening Collection.



show of the previous season were to replace the mish-mash tops of the other two units.

On Wednesday, August 21, Jones had hired local help and a drayman with his team to unload the tents for inspection and airing. Then occurred an accident that defies description and explanation. While giving instructions to a worker in a car, and was near the rear of a horse, the animal raised its hind leg and kicked Jones in the left leg. The horseshoe caught Jones square in the knee and with a force so great that knee and hoof became locked. Quick, intelligent action on the part of workers prevented a greater calamity. One man grabbed the horse by the bit strap; another seized the horse's leg, holding it much as a blacksmith when shoeing, thus anchoring the animal stationary on three feet, while another man cut and tore the garments to free the knee.

The ligaments of the kneecap were torn and the knee bone broken; another break in the leg also was sustained. Aurora doctors could do no more than administer an opiate and Jones was rushed to St. John's Hospital at Springfield (Mo.) 35 miles distant. A railroad surgeon, experienced in bone injuries, treated Jones.

Elmer accompanied his brother to





**F. J. Rogers, equestrian director on left with a group of performers on the Cole Bros. Circus in 1917. Jim Dunwoody Collection.**

the hospital at Springfield and when he was informed of the seriousness of the injuries, he became panic-stricken at the thought of managing a 16-car show. Without consulting the other brothers, who as yet had not reached Aurora, he proceeded to cancel all the stellar attractions J. Augustus had signed.

Arrangements were made to take Jones to his home at Warren (Pa.) A hospital spring cot was provided, but because it was impossible to move him and also impossible to get the cot into the Pullman compartment, Jones made the trip to Warren in the baggage car. A special attendant was with him to Cleveland (Ohio) and here the writer relieved the attendant. I received a bottle of small pills (opium), towels and other items needed to care for the patient and we arrived in Warren Sunday morning, August 25. A horse-drawn ambulance was awaiting our arrival, and Jones was taken to his home at 24 Glenwood Avenue. Three doctors examined Jones and following a consultation, a specialist was called

from Philadelphia. Following the latter's examination it was decided the patient's condition was not serious, but the loss of much blood necessitated the injection of serum. A brother-in-law of Jones donated blood at the State Hospital, North Warren, which was prepared into a serum and injected. The X-ray machine was still in the future.

Bedside reports stated that Jones was steadily improving, but these reports belied the true facts. The pallor of his face held the look of death. He passed away Sunday afternoon, September 1, 1918.

Elmer in the meantime consolidated the two small units into one, adopted the Cole title, yet before the show moved word was received of the death of J. Augustus Jones. The three brothers left for Warren to attend the funeral, which was held Saturday, September 7th.

The services were held in the First

**The auction of the Cole Bros. World Toured Circus is shown here on February 26, 1918, in Shreveport, La. Cheerful Gardner, elephant trainer is on the left. J. Augustus Jones is standing on the tub holding a cane behind the man in the dark suit. Woodcock Collection.**



**Owen Lewis and his January act is shown on the Cole show in 1917. Jim Dunwoody Collection.**

Presbyterian Church, and following those rites and an eulogy by the officiating clergyman, the rituals of the Masons and the Elks were conducted, both impressive in their presentation. Interment was in Oakland Cemetery, Warren.

John Augustus Jones was born September 13, 1868 and died September 1, 1918, lacking 12 days of being 50 years old.

Survivors included his mother, who at an advanced age made her home with him; his wife, Martha; a son and a daughter; two other brothers not engaged in show business, and two sisters.

He was a stockholder and director of the First National Bank of Youngsville and of the Warren Savings Bank; chief stockholder of the Forest Furniture Company of Youngsville, and also stockholder of many other Warren County enterprises, as well as much Warren borough real estate.

To give an insight of his charitable nature, every season when leaving on tour there was a sheaf of notes signed by him at the Youngsville bank and no doubt also at the Warren bank. Any person for whom he endorsed a note could have it renewed if he remembered the due date and paid the interest. Many a person acquired their home by the helping hand of Jones.

#### REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Following the burial services, Elmer and Aleck returned to the circus. Richard remained behind, withdrawing from the show business. He visualized trouble for the truncated outfit, and he was right.

The Cole paper depicting the stellar displays originally contracted by J. Augustus Jones, were being hung by the billing crew. Lon Gillette had assumed charge in the absence of the brothers. Trouble developed at West Plains (Mo.), where the show was billed for September 5.

The show train pulled in and a patrolman on the grounds looked in disbelief as he saw the four-car train.



Assured it was the complete circus, he conveyed this information to his superior. The police chief informed the mayor who called some councilmen and the group went to the show grounds. Besides the lack of feature acts, the "big herd of elephants 11, count 'em, 11" turned out to be only two pachyderms in the charge of Cheerful Gardner, who upheld his right to the name by his cheerful attitude despite troubles of the show.

The West Plains Daily Quill gives details of "something not down on the bills." In its issue of September 6 that newspaper said, in part:

"Yesterday evidently was a hoodoo day for Cole Brothers show, a small circus which arrived in West Plains at 7:45 yesterday morning, minus so many of the big features which it had advertised that city officials for a short time considered refusing to let them unload their train here. Not only did the show receive a cool reception from the weather man, but from the people of the town as well."

What the newspaper didn't say was that the town officials at first decided not to issue a permit for the abbreviated circus. Pleadings by Gillette, after explaining the mishap and death of Jones, induced the officials to relent, but only on the conditions that the admission price be reduced to 25 cents for adults; fifteen cents for children; ten cents for side show.

News of the size of the show was quickly reported by those who were on the grounds to watch the circus unload. These reports, plus inclement weather, resulted in a small turnout, mostly a "paper house."

The bad news of the abridged show its lack of advertised features, reached the towns ahead of the circus. Missouri is known as the "Show Me" state and its residents wanted what was advertised. Disappointment over the performance in general precipitated many disputes.

Resentment flared in many towns to the fighting point. Insults and derogatory epithets greeted the performers. Troupers, on tenterhooks over the situation and anticipating serious trouble, jumped the show, each stand having less displays than the previous one. "Doubling in brass" became a chore of the faithful. The circus ground to a halt at Corinth (Miss.) to end the 1918 season.

Here Elmer revamped the show as a 2-car outfit under the title of Cooper Brothers and played in the South.

In 1919-1920 he was out with the Cole title, but it was two-car, as were all his shows from then on. In 1920, at the close of the Northern tramping tour, he organized a minstrel show, at that time a form of entertainment enjoying public favor. His first burnt cork outfit was called Famous Alabama

# FOR SALE

## 20-CAR SHOW

### COLE BROS.' WORLD SHOWS

### AT PUBLIC SALE

February 26th, 1918  
on State Fair Grounds, Shreveport, La.,  
10:30 A. M.

EVERYTHING TO BE SOLD IN PARTS, AS FOLLOWS:

7 steel Flat Cars, 3 steel Stock Cars (these 10 cars are solid steel cars, best ever built, length 60 feet), 4 Sleeping Cars, 1 Baggage Car, 60 ft. long, steel platform and steel wheels, equipped for passenger service; 1 Advance Car, 76 ft. long, steel platforms and steel trucks, six wheels, equipped with boiler, office, and all complete; 74-ft. Workingmen's Sleeper, will sleep 120 people, fine car; 1 Stateroom Car, 80 ft. long, a very fine car; 120-ft. Round Top, with two 40-ft. middle pieces and one 50-ft. middle piece, 10-ft. side wall, made of 8-oz. drill, used 12 weeks; all kinds of smaller Tents; 1 Top, 100-ft. Round Top, with three 40-ft. middle pieces, no wall; Seats, Lights, Tools, Blocks and Falls, Poles, Uniforms, Wardrobe, Bedding, 5 Cross Cages, 5 Big Dens, 1 fine Ticket Wagon, 12 Baggage Wagons, Pole Wagon, Cook House Wagon and Cook House Outfit, complete; 5 fine Parade, Band and Tableau Wagons, 1 Calliope mounted on auto truck, one Air Calliope on fine light carved wagon pulled by ponies (this wagon has fine carving), 5 Performing Male Lions in one group (these lions are coming 5 years this spring; a very fine lion act), 17-section Steel Arena, 2 Male Lions and 2 Females, not educated; 5 nice young Bears, ready to train; 2 Hyenas, 1 Deer, 1 Gnu, 2 Sacred Cattle, 6 Camels, 1 large Male Elephant, 8 ft., 3 inches, does nice act; 3 Performing Female Elephants, best in America, and gentle; 76 fine Draft Horses, real circus horses, young and in good condition; 20 head Ring Stock, one 8-Pony Drill, 20 other Shetland Ponies, 38 sets Work Harness. Here is a chance of a lifetime to buy property at a reasonable figure and organize a circus or carnival right on the premises. No rent or trackage for train. This saves you freight and assembling. You can open here March 25th.

J. AUGUSTUS JONES, care Youree Hotel, Shreveport, La.

This advertisement appeared in the BILLBOARD announcing the sale of the Cole show in Shreveport. The inventory gives a rundown on the equipment. Pfennig Collection.

Minstrels, which was offered under canvas in the West.

In spring of 1921 Elmer acquired the title and went out as Wheeler Brothers. The Cooper show was out with Aleck managing. The Cole title lay dormant that season, but was revived the following year and continued until 1927 when the title was sold to John Pluto.

Elmer brought the Cole & Rogers title out of mothballs in 1927 and toured Canada. Aleck operated the Cooper Brothers show. During the Depression Aleck retired from the show business and purchased the hotel at Chandlers Valley. There was a large barn connected with the hostelry in which Elmer quartered his horses during the winter season. With Aleck out of the show business the Jones circus dynasty was inherited by Elmer who continued until the late 40s, when he retired.

He had waited too long. He failed to acquire the wealth amassed by his brother, J. Augustus Jones. There was a change in the amusement world. The two-car shows that carried entertainment to the hinterland were superseded by television.

Even Dame Fortune deserted Elmer,

and her daughter, that brazen jade, Misfortune, clung to him as he entered the "G" door in the sideshow tent or in the pie car.

Following retirement, Elmer would visit Jamestown, Warren, Corry and other places to seek diversion from humdrum inactivity by shooting dice. He had earned the title "Gambler Jones."

Whatever his shortcomings, he never forgot his friends and he never refused to extend the helping hand. He was generous to a fault and even to the stranger who would ask he would "toss a fish." Each winter he would journey to Sarasota, Fla., to mingle with circus friends. He died at his home April 8, 1962. He was 83 years old.

#### THE AFTERPIECE

When Richard Jones retired from the circus business to his home in North Warren (Pa.) he purchased the local livery stable. One of his first acts was to enlarge the building with a 60-foot addition, making it, no doubt, the longest livery stable in the state. But the addition was not used for stabling animals. A new sign on the building told of the new services: "Sales Stable and Carriage Painting." There are some graybeards in the village who will affirm that many of the "carriages" that rolled off the nearby railroad had six-inch wide wheels, the spokes painted red, and that in spite of the tarpaulin covering the carriage,





they knew it was a circus parade wagon. On the sales stable angle, any species of animal was obtainable and one summer an elephant and a pair of camels grazed in contentment on the Jones farm at Chandlers Valley while awaiting their buyer to call for them.

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The narrow gauge railroad that operated between Youngsville and Sugar Grove, its tracks only a short distance from the Jones farm, was mentioned earlier in this article. This rail line was built to provide freight and passenger traffic between the two boroughs and other smaller villages on the line. A chief source of revenue was the passenger traffic of students attending the Sugar Grove Seminary, operated by the Erie Conference of the United Brethren in Christ Church. It was the only rail line to Sugar Grove. At Youngsville connections were available to other railroads. In 1918, with this nation at war, the academy was closed. This loss of revenue sounded the deathknell for the "dinky". It seems ironic that the railroad upon which J. Augustus Jones based his hopes of building his winter-quarters on the family farm, should end its career the same year Jones died.

Every student of circus history has knowledge of the stigma of jinx that has been placed on J. Augustus Jones' death. He sustained fatal injuries from the kick of a dray horse like his predecessor using the Cole title, Martin Downs, and the jinx theory has prevailed through the years. The author of this article raises the question, "What jinx?" I was a reporter on the Warren Mirror at the time and wrote the Jones obituary. I wrote: "In this (kick by a dray horse) there is a strange coincidence in the death of Mr.

Memorial erected in Oakland Cemetery, Warren, Pa., on the gravesite of J. Augustus Jones. The marble figures represent Mrs. Martha Jones placing a wreath on the grave. The broken granite pillar represents a life broken before mission fulfilled. Author's Collection.

Jones. Martin Downs, the original proprietor of the Cole Brothers Circus, was kicked by a farmer's horse while buying horses one time and passed away. That Mr. Jones should meet the same kind of death is more than passing strange."

I sent the Jones obituary to the *Billboard* and the *New York Clipper*. The "strange coincidence" became a jinx in their articles. And jinx it continues to be today to all writers despite the fact that no similar misfortune has befallen other owners of the title for nearly six decades.

The "strange coincidence" was that both men were kicked, not by circus horses, but by animals not belonging to the show. Fatal injuries from kicks by horses at that period were as common as fatal injuries in auto mishaps today. Horseshoeing at that time was considered a hazardous profession. The other newspaper, the *Times*, made no mention of the Downs' fatality. Jones had told me of the accident and I used the angle to "dress up" the obituary.

Mrs. Martha L. Jones, a grief-stricken widow, ordered erected one of the most outstanding memorials for her late husband's grave. It was ready for Memorial Day 1919. It consists of a life-size marble statue of a female figure placing a wreath on the grave. To her left is a granite pillar, 18 inches in diameter, but broken in half, and on

which in bas relief is the name, J. Augustus Jones.

The feminine figure represents Mrs. Jones; the broken pillar represents a life broken off before its mission was accomplished.

What was this mission? When the answer was available, no one asked. Now, when an answer is wanted, no one can give it. But I like to think the pillar marks J. Augustus Jones' crusade against grift in an effort to clean up the circus.

Mrs. Martha Jones passed away in 1962 and is buried beside her husband.

The broken pillar is slightly concave at the top and frequently birds build their nests in the hollow. At dawn they raise their voices to sing a requiem to J. Augustus Jones, who dared to fight grift at a period when it was considered a necessary evil.

**JONES BROTHERS**

WORLD TOURED SHOWS

ON A SCALE OF MAGNITUDE NEVER ATTEMPTED BEFORE, COMING IN ALL ITS VAST ENTIRETY

A MAJESTIC DISPLAY OF ENTIRELY NEW PRIZES—BIGGER, BETTER, GREATER, GLANDER THAN EVER BEFORE

<b>3 RINGS STAGES SHOWS</b>	<b>3 TRAINS MENAGERIES EXHIBITIONS</b>	<b>3 SUPER ARCADE COMPANIES</b>	<b>3 SPECTACULAR PROGRAMS</b>
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THE UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS OF A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE AND UNLIMITED CAPITAL  
UNEQUALLED IN GRANDEUR, MAGNITUDE, MERIT OR REPUTATION

**ACTING ANIMAL MILLENIUM.**  
Introducing at one time, in one strongly built steel barrel arena,  
**MORE PERFORMING BEASTS**  
OF DIFFERENT SPECIES  
THAN ANY FIVE OTHER SHOWS EVER HAVE OR EVER WILL.

THINK OF IT! ELEPHANTS, CAMELS, SACRED CATTLE AND POWERFUL HORSES IN A FREE AND FRIVOLOUS MANNER, WITH FRODOODOR BLOOD-THIRSTY TOPPING AND LUNGS IN IT NOT FRUIT.

A PECULIAR PROPRIETARY PERFORMANCE

A SERIES OF NOVEL ABILITIES, INTRODUCED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE  
FUN-MAKERS WHOSE FANCIES AND COLLIES FAIRLY MAKE FOLKS FALL OFF THEIR SEATS  
MORE AND BIGGER SALARIED PROFESSIONAL FOOLS THAN ANYBODY ELSE CAN OFFER

A PERFECT STAGGERER FOR OTHER MANAGERIES  
NO OTHER SHOW ON EARTH CAN DUPLICATE  
SEEMINGLY SUPER-HUMAN TRIUMPH OVER NATURE

**DEATH CHASM VAULTING A-WHEEL**  
IN ALL THE GREAT CIRCUS AREAS AND IN THE GREAT STADIUMS OF AMERICA  
JONES BROTHERS' GREATER WORLD-TOURED SHOWS PRESENT IT  
THE MOST DARING AND DANGEROUS OF ALL THE GREAT STADIUMS OF AMERICA  
A PERMANENT PLAY AT ONCE UNDOUBLED AND UNREPLACABLE

THE MOST SPECTACULAR FREE OUT-DOOR PICTURE SHOW  
MAGNIFICENT, HISTORICAL AND ORIENTAL PARADE  
THE MOST SPECTACULAR FREE OUT-DOOR PICTURE SHOW

EVERY MORNING AT 10 O'CLOCK  
THE TREMENDOUSLY ENLARGED **BIG NEW FREE STREET PARADE**  
TWO PERFORMANCES DAILY, AFTERNOON AND NIGHT  
SHOWS OPEN AS 1 AND 7 O'CLOCK P. M. PERFORMANCES COMMENCE ONE HOUR LATER



# The 1926 Sells-Floto Circus Elephants

By Gordon Brown

Those 1926 Sells-Floto bulls spooked easily - or did they? Certainly they did in the first week in August. One of the three stampedes in Western Canada was the worst in circus history, creating more attention and publicity than any other similar event. Descriptions of the runaways differ, especially concerning their possible causes. Why was the trouble concentrated in just six days in midseason? Let's take a detailed look at the activities of the bulls in 1926!

The American Circus Corporation owned by Jerry Mugivan, Bert Bowers and Ed Ballard wintered two of their shows, Sells-Floto and Hagenbeck-Wallace in Peru, Indiana before the 1926 season. Lewis Reed, one of the top American trainers, who had been S.F. elephant superintendent for several years, was reported in the Jan. 30 *Billboard* to have taught the bulls to do the "Charleston". On April 5, Sells-Floto, augmented by some acts and animals off Hagenbeck-Wallace, left to open the season indoors at the Chicago

Lewis Reed, well known elephant trainer, had been on the Sells-Floto show, but had married Adele Nelson, and taken over the three Nelson bulls prior to the opening of the 1926 season. This photo of Reed was taken around 1920. Burt Wilson Collection.



Coliseum. An enthusiastic review in the April 7 *Billboard* listed the displays: bulls participated in the opening Spec. "Birth of the Rainbow"; Display 3 featured a tiger riding a bull, probably the veteran Trilby; and in Display 15, 5 rings of elephants werwere presented by Babe Gardner, Rae Bailey, Effie Rairden, Irene Ledgett and Miss Weber. Highlighting the show were the "Famous Hanneford Riders" and the "Famous Flying Wards and Kimballs". Perhaps significantly, all department bosses are listed with the exception of the elephant department.

On April 22, Doc Waddell, publicity department, reported, "A great piece of publicity was turning 24 elephants into Chicago's Loop at noon hour when thousands were afoot and thousands more in autos passed through". Certainly Model T Fords, Essexes and early Chevs must have created enough hissing, backfiring and yelling to spook any herd but there is no mention of trouble in Chicago. Perhaps the presence of "Cheerful" Charlie Gardner, Hagenbeck-Wallace famous elephant boss with James Dooley prevented any antics. Previous superintendent Lewis Reed was not "with it", as he had acquired the three Nelson elephants, and was playing vaudeville and fair dates. Unfortunate-

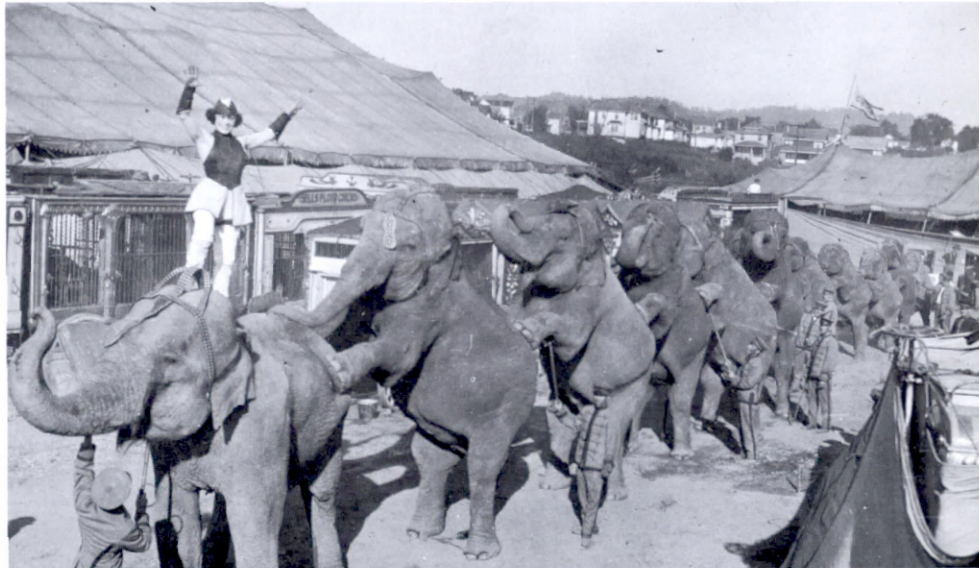
ly, Cheerful Gardner returned to Peru for the April 26 opening of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show.

The show went under canvas at Danville, Illinois on April 26 after arrival of the big top, seats and outdoor equipment, to complete the 25 car train. By the May 7 Wheeling, West Virginia stand, *Billboard* reported that Bill Emery had the S.F. bulls, but by May 21 at Plainfield, N.J., Jim Dooley was mentioned as elephant boss. On May 20, at Long Branch, N.J., 40 horses and two elephants were required to pull wagons mired to the hubs, off the lot.

The bulls were apparently well enough behaved at a Shriner's Hospital performance for Crippled Children including Rae Bailey and the elephants in Springfield, Mass., June 17, at another Shriner's show in Albany on June 19, and at Binghampton June 22 when in the morning, the herd of elephants was taken to the "Dan and Lena Club" composed of kiddies who contributed funds for the zoo to purchase more animals.

Meanwhile reports from Western Canada were optimistic. Karl K. Knecht in his May 8 *Billboard* column reported that Canada should have a

Irene Ledgett is shown here in 1925 with the Sells-Floto herd doing a long mount in the back yard. Pfening Collection.





good circus field - "conditions best since 1919 for big crops and good prices". Also a June 23 report from Edmonton, Alberta reported that a motion to increase the circus lot rental was voted down by the city council, and the existing rate of \$300.00 would remain. The Al G. Barnes Circus had packed houses on June 12 in the city.

After a long 365 mile "Sunday run" from Medicine Hat to Edmonton, Alberta, the bulls and camels were unloaded at the C.P.R. Depot about 3 p.m. on August 2. According to the Edmonton Bulletin, the small bull "Mary" with three others had just been hitched to a cage wagon when, frightened by the yapping of a little dog, she trumpeted shrilly and then with a mighty heave broke away out of her harness and started to run west on the main street. According to the Edmonton Journal, the sharp barking of a tiny fox terrier, and to the B.B. Correspondent, "A dog hitched to a small coaster wagon" provoked panic. The fright was contagious and before the handlers could do anything to prevent it, 14 elephants were making off through the railroad yards and adjacent streets.

There was a wild scene at the depot as the bulls broke for liberty; the crowds broke for safety fearing that some of the cage wagons might upset in the scramble. One little girl fell and broke her arm, luckily she was the only local resident hurt.

Crashing through the high board fence surrounding the General Hospital Gardens, three of the miscreants ploughed their way through potato and berry patches, upsetting chicken coops and stirring up great clouds of dust, as they rushed on to crash through the western fence leaving three great holes enroute. Behind the trumpeting animals rushed a small army of circus men trying in vain to head them off and get them back to the cars. Sunday afternoon strollers and autoists took one look and dashed for the sidestreets giving the stampede a wide berth but many of the ubiquitous small boys, springing up from "nowhere" joined the wild hallow through the west end of the 74,000 population city. Turning north, knocking down fences like matchwood, several bulls ran between closely spaced houses, carrying away parts of the adjacent verandas.

Reaching the north-west city limits, they milled around in the high brush. Circus men climbed to the roof of the five story Government Elevator and located the animals by watching the falling crashing trees. The Bulletin reported "Poodles Hanneford, clown equestrian, proved the Napoleon of the day when he made a hurried canvas of residences and small stores in the district buying up loaves of bread which he used to entice the animals out of the brush until Jimmy Dooley and

Thursday, July 28th, 1925

CRANBROOK  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

**SELLS  
FLOTO  
CIRCUS**

THE CIRCUS BEAUTIFUL


"Poodles" Hanneford, England's Own — a British Subject — and without a doubt the Greatest Riding Comedian that the World has ever seen.

TOGETHER WITH  
THE WORLD'S  
GREATEST  
SPECTACLE  
1000 PEOPLE  
HORSES, ELEPHANTS AND  
JUNGLE BORN MAN KILLERS  
INCLUDING ALSO SEVERAL  
HUNDRED GORGEOUS SINGING  
AND DANCING GIRLS  
ZOO-CIRCUS HIPPODROME  
400 ARENIC STARS



2 SHOWS  
DAILY  
2 & 8 P.M.

AND



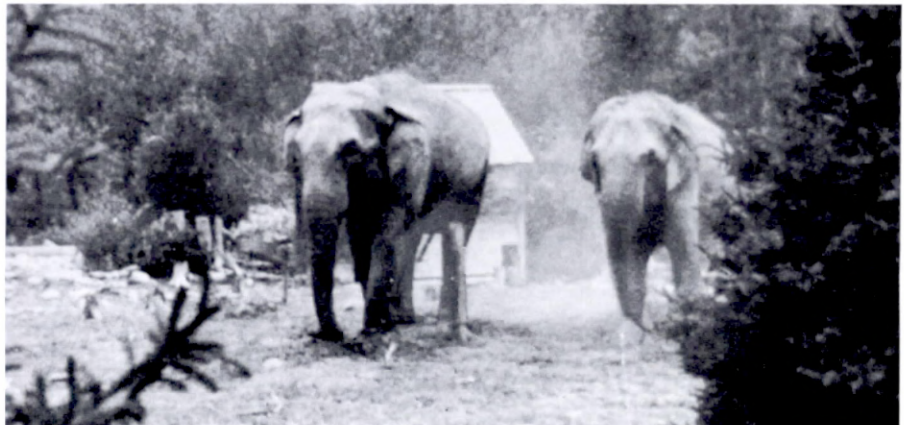
EARTH'S BEST  
AND ONLY  
EXCLUSIVE CIRCUS

NO STREET PARADE. TICKETS ON SALE CIRCUS DAY ONLY AT CRANBROOK DRUG AND BOOK STORE

This newspaper ad used by the Floto show for the Cranbrook date August 6, 1926, had special type inserted telling of Poodles Hanneford being a British subject. Author's Collection.

his assistants could hobble them". All the animals but one were tethered by 9 p.m. but efforts to round up Mary were still futile. Crashing out of the woods, she stampeded through her pursuers, frightened by the lights of autos and torches. Curley Stewart, assistant to Manager Zack Terrell, succeeded in herding Mary into a tennis court but as he tried to slam the gate, she whirled and with ears flapping, eyes blazing and trumpeting wildly, she charged for the gate. Stewart armed with a fork, tried to bar the way, but she rushed past him as he swung on to a flapping ear only to be shaken off and hurled

On the day following the stampede at Cranbrook, two elephants, probably the reliable Frieda and Trilby weaved in a clearing, after being staked out with the hope of attracting the miscreants. M. L. McFarland Photo.



against the gatepost. His face and chest were battered but after a few minutes he continued the chase although compelled to go to the hospital later. Fortunately Stewart was the only person injured in the chase except for minor bruises to several other circus men.

Mary continued her wild rampage through a cemetery and smashed through the Cushing Brothers lumber yard fence. George McKay, night watchman making his rounds about 11 p.m., was startled to see the elephant looming up outside a large door of the building. The next minute with a splintering of the doorway, Mary came in as George left by another door. Running and trumpeting around inside, the badly scared bull upset several lumber trucks and finally battered her way out through another door of steel construction which was torn from its hinges. The circus men called it a day, if not a night, when Mary ran back into heavy brush nearby.

Shortly after 5 a.m., Trilby, the biggest and boss elephant was taken to the site where Mary was still trampling and circling. According to the Bulletin, "When the little elephant saw the herd boss, it gave a shrill scream and ran straight to the big animal. Trilby wrapped her trunk around the smaller elephant and the two stood still with occasional grumbles and rumbles until Dooley and his assistants chained Mary to Trilby; Edmonton's big elephant hunt was over".

Edmonton author Tony Cashman<sup>1</sup> and the Edmonton Bulletin<sup>2</sup> even reported some humorous "angles". At the General Hospital, "Sister Superior was startled that quiet Sunday to see a little nun come flying up the hospital corridor: "Oh come quickly! the little nun shouted, "there's an elephant in the garden!" The Superior did run to the window, thinking sadly that poor sister had doubtless been working too hard for the greater glory of God, and perhaps it was God's holy will that sister should have a vacation. However, there was nothing wrong with sister. There in the garden was



indeed an elephant; the husky male Young Snyder, assisted by two other elephants was rooting up potatoes as the nuns watched. Young Snyder and his pals, frightened by the yells of their pursuers, disappeared through the western fence.

Poodles Hanneford, puffing along several blocks behind the runaways was joined by an excited Edmonton man who demanded particulars. "Are they running away? Did they get away from you?" asked the newcomer and Hanneford, who at this point had been chasing elephants for about two hours, turned a disgusted look on his questioner, "Oh no", he puffed, "we're just showing them the town!"

FORM 19	CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY	Printed in Canada
Train Order No. <i>465</i>	Date <i>Aug 7 40</i>	FORM 19
To <i>Mr. J. J. Guilmont</i>		
From <i>Edmonton</i>		
Keep clear out for elephants on track advise if sighted from first telegraph office giving location		
J. J. G.		
Made <i>Tom</i> Date <i>1159</i>		

The famous train order was sent out by J. Francis Guilmont, CPR rail dispatcher on August 7, 28 hours after the stampede, is probably the only one of its kind ever put out by any railroad in North America. The original copy was in the Harper Joy collection.

Then there was the little old lady on the west edge of town. Heedless of the shouting and yelling, she stood in her garden, her little white apron in both hands and as three elephants tore by, she stood her ground bravely chirping, "Shoo, shoo, get out of my garden, you dirty beasts." By a miracle the elephants parted as they passed her and she escaped injury.

Poodles Hanneford and John Helliott, the lion trainer, came on Snyder, considered by the bull hands to be the worst elephant of the herd. As he hesitated for a few seconds, Hanneford grabbed his tail with both hands and yelled, "Tail up, Snyder, tail up". Snyder stopped dead in his tracks, reached for the tail of an elephant in front of him, found none and looked around to see what was holding him. "I couldn't hold on but I couldn't let go and luckily Helliott came along with a loaf of bread and I broke off a little and offered it to him", said Hanneford. "By sheer good luck, he took it and reached for more and Helliott made it last until we got back to the cars, coaxing him

along all the way, while I held onto his tail to make him think he was only one of a line of bulls going back".

The legal adjustor seemingly did very well in settling the claims. The *Journal* reported, "Damages were not extensive, running to \$75.00 at the General Hospital, \$35.00 at Cushing's and some other very small amounts".

Next day, aided by the publicity of the Sunday events, the show played for two capacity audiences at Edmonton on the Monday, August 3 stand.

The show arrived in Calgary, Alberta for the Tuesday, August 4 stand at 8:25 a.m. By 9 a.m. the bulls reported by the *Calgary Herald*<sup>3</sup> to be "still nervous and fidgety after their escapade in Edmonton" were unloaded on the Ninth Avenue East sidings by the C.P.R. freight sheds. "No sooner did they scent the open spaces than about a hundred tons of elephant flesh went careening west". The herd scattered the big crowd that had assembled to see the circus unload. Reaching a point a block west of where they had broken loose, they suddenly turned with frantic "bull men" hanging to their huge flapping ears. The main bulk of the herd was stopped near the unloading grounds. Three of the bulls however, escaped into the C.P.R. yards. There ensued another wild scramble, this time on the part of the circus men themselves, as they cleared the grounds of horses and perishable materials. After the three elephants had trumpeted and torn aro

boss elephant man and two assistants, succeeded in bringing them under control. Shortly afterwards, the whole herd was taken safely on the ten block walk to Victoria Park, where they settled down quietly. Officials stressed "The elephants never think of stampeding on the lot". In spite of the stampede, the whole circus was established on the grounds before noon and everything was ready for the full house at 3 p.m.

The members of the 1926 herd are established with little doubt in an excellent report in the Aug. 4 *Calgary Herald*<sup>3</sup> by "Walter" with a detailed interview with George Myers, publicity agent and announcer. The names of thirteen of the fourteen bulls are listed: Tillie is omitted in this article but her name appears in a similar listing, in another excellent review by a *Cranbrook Herald* reporter<sup>4</sup> dated August 12. "Walter" with tongue in cheek interviewed the elephants. "Mary said (the Edmonton stampede) wasn't really her fault. She was not scared of a little dog, she said, though she abhorred mice, but this dog had a wagon attached to it, and that is what set her going. She admitted setting the rest of the bunch going, and regretted staying out all night, keeping Jimmy Dooley out with her." Trilby commented, "She's just a young thing, one can never tell what these flappers will

do these days. Mary has always been pretty good, but the story about the dog is all poppycock. It's the air here. Mary came out that morning, feeling pretty good and wanted to get out for a bit and the dog story is really an excuse. I admit I squealed a bit myself, but I saw it was no good, so I helped to round up the rest of the boys and girls. The damage was really nothing. We have to get through some place, and what is the use of asking permission or stopping to open gates? We generally keep on going when we start and what are a couple of fences or so to us?" Walter said "Nothing" and the interview ended.

Here is some background on the 1926 herd with Sells-Floto.

#### TRILBY

One of six bulls obtained from Hagenbeck, Germany. Joined the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show in July 1902 in the first year of the Tammen and Bonfils venture.<sup>5</sup> Listed as the "Clown Elephant" in the 1905 parade of the Great Floto Shows. Courtney Riley Cooper, Sells-Floto publicist and famous circus author writes that Trilby<sup>6</sup>, with Snyder I and Frieda slid down into the Snake River, Idaho and survived the plunge over the falls and the whirlpools beneath. Became the herd leader after "Old Mom Mary" moved on in 1921.

#### FRIEDA

Also joined the show in 1902 from Hagenbeck. In the 1905 parade, carried an open leopard cage mounted on her back.<sup>5</sup> In the Snake River episode, smarter than her two companions, she swam straight across the river avoiding the treacherous falls.<sup>6</sup> Nearly as large as Snyder I in 1920.<sup>7</sup> Subqueen of the herd after Trilby took over about 1920. C.R. Cooper perhaps significantly relates a pre 1920 Western Canada stampede on Sells-Floto provoked by "millions of mosquitoes" when the herd led by "Old Mom" and Frieda broke away from Fred Alispaw, the great elephant man.<sup>8a</sup>

#### BIG TILLIE

Owned by W.P. Hall, Lancaster, Mo., in early 1916. Sold to Wortham Carnival, then after that season, sold to Mugivan and Bowers.<sup>8</sup> Sold to Sells-Floto, joined at Denver Quarters in Feb. 1922 as "mother" of Virginia. Said to be about 32 years old in 1926.

#### KAS MO

Twin baby elephants, named for Kansas and Missouri, joined the show at Yakima, Washington, in 1909 fresh from India. Cooper relates that on their first day on the show, they ran straight through the entire herd provoking a general stampede resulting in \$1,000 damages. Subsequently, they broke away on a windy day and later smashed a \$200 plate window during their first parade. In early 1912, trained by Lucia Zora to pull a flower bedecked





**Charlie-Ed was captured on September 14, five miles west of Cranbrook, after 39 days at large. Spot Griffin had his shoulder hurt and Charlie Morgan had his ribs injured during the capture. Alex Larson Collection.**

two-wheeled cart in tandem, they learned well in quarters. But on the night show of opening day, they ran the whole length of the hippodrome track, followed by the rest of the herd, while en route ditching the unfortunate Zora!

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#### **SNYDER II**

After the tragic death of Snyder I in Sept. 1920 by execution at Salina, Kansas, the show needed a new featured male elephant. Billy, a young male spent some early years with W.P. Hall. About 1917, he was sold to Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus. After the final tour of that show in 1920, it belonged to Mugivan and Bowers. Billy was exchanged for a hippo and air calliope off the Floto show.<sup>9</sup> On arrival in Denver in 1921, he became Snyder (II). He grew considerably in the "20s" and starred with Irene Ledgett in the center ring.

#### **VIRGINIA**

In 1921, W.P. Hall sold Virginia to Louis Ruhe, another leading elephant importer. He promptly sold her to the John Robinson Circus<sup>10</sup> later in 1921 and in Feb. 1922, she was transferred to another American Circus Corporation show - Sells-Floto and dubbed the "baby of Tillie".<sup>8</sup>

#### **MARY, MYRTLE, BESSIE, TONY**

Three small females, most if not all received in 1922 by the show while in New England from the Hagenbeck Company, Germany. Mary came to the show in Denver in 1918.<sup>8</sup>

#### **BABE**

Origin unknown. May have also come to me from Hagenbeck in 1922.

#### **CHARLIE ED**

A small male, delivered to the show in New England from Hagenbeck in 1922. Named after Ed Ballard's son who lived in West Baden, Ind. Broke one tusk in falling out of a car door when a punk.<sup>8</sup>

#### **TOMMY**

A male, probably also from Hagenbeck in 1922.

Some sources suggest that the tusked male "Billy Sunday" was on the show. The *Calgary Herald* on July 23/26 under a two column pic of a bull pulling a cart avowed that "Billy Sunday" named after the famous evangelist "will be one of the 15 elephants with the Sells-Floto Circus. Eugene Whitmore<sup>11</sup> has captioned a bull unloading at Willimantic, Conn., June 6, 1926 as "Billy Sunday". However, in addition to the lists previously mentioned in the *Calgary Herald* on Aug. 4/26 and the *Cranbrook Herald* on Aug. 12/26 which do not mention "Billy Sunday", Homer Walton in his history of the Rhoda Royal Elephants<sup>12</sup> notes that "Billy Sunday was sold in the winter of 1924-25 to the Seils-Sterling Circus." The Billboard dated March 20/26 mentions that Al Lindemann on Seils-Sterling has "taught Billy Sunday to do the Charleston" and dated July 24/26 under the heading "Seils-Sterling Doing Fine in Wisconsin" notes that "Billy Sunday, the elephant was given a birthday party by the kiddies after the July 4 afternoon performance in Platteville". Although the evangelist was a great circus fan and a great one to stop off at a circus and dedicate a horse or lion or tiger as his namesake, it seems unlikely that he was represented on S.F. in 1926.

Meanwhile at Cranbrook, British Columbia on the western slopes of the towering Rocky Mountains, advertising was blooming for the Aug. 6 stand. A rather ominous news report appeared in the July 29 *Cranbrook Herald*; "Elephants On Track - Passengers on the night mail train from Singapore to the Malay States were severely jolted when the train crashed into two elephants which had strayed onto the track. One of them was killed but the other one dashed off. The engine was only slightly damaged and was able to continue." The following week's paper dated Aug. 5 whitewashed the Edmonton events; "Some of the elephants were thrown into a panic" but "The animals were not inclined to commit any wilful damage, but were frightened and in running away, naturally did some property damage. They were finally brought into control by the keepers and by the use of docile animals which had not taken part in the panic. That there was not more damage done would seem to indicate that the animals had undergone excep-



tionally thorough training, as even in their wildest stampeding, they offered no violence to any human being in their path."

Indeed at Lethbridge Aug. 4 and Blairmore, Aug. 5, no problems were reported. Thursday night, the show trains pulled over the 4,580 feet peak of the Crowsnest Pass in two sections to Cranbrook in southeastern B.C. "On Friday morning, Aug. 6, the pachyderms were unloaded but not chained at railside", recounts Dave Kay, Cranbrook historian.<sup>13</sup> "Eddie Woods, a young lad then, recalls they took off with trunks high and ears wide. Eddie took to cover under an old-fashioned culvert nearby while folks scattered in all directions". C.F.A. A.J. Ironside wrote "Led by Myrtle, 12 of the 14 elephants started across the tracks, past the coal sheds and made for the dense woods."<sup>14</sup>

Dave Kay ponders, "Just what started the stampede has never been known" and there are no opinions in the Cranbrook papers. Many writers however have had their guesses.

The Nelson B.C. Aug. 9/26 paper was the first to guess "Trainers declare the high altitude has affected" the elephants. On reflection however, higher altitudes would seem more likely to "slow 'em down."

Elephant Hisotiran C.E. Davis<sup>15</sup> notes the altitude of Cranbrook took over 3,000 ft., and the smoke of forest fires made the elephants very nervous; "A small dog, barking at the strange animals, supplied the excuse for the third stampede in six days." Canadian Historian Fred H. Phillips<sup>16</sup> opines that "in the mist of early morning, a team of draft horses stumbled into a pile of tin cans and that was enough to start the gallop." Ed Allen writing with F. Bev Kelley<sup>17</sup> adds the possibility that the elephant men were too full of "Dago Red" but is dogmatic "The real cause of the worst runaway in circus history was a fast freight engine letting off steam as it went past the herd at the unloading runs." But surely compared with the Chicago Loop at noon, barking dogs, even attached to coaster wagons, or horses kicking through cans or even escaping steam would seem quite insignificant, especially in 1926.

C.R. Cooper<sup>6</sup> relates that mosquitoes provoked a stampede in Canada by selecting vulne in my recollection, especially bad in the mountains during the 1920's often necessitating station platform "smudges" - smoky fires of green lumber to gain a little respite. Certainly this could have been one explanation for the time and geographic aspects of the stampedes, but there is no mention of any unusual excess of these pests.

"Musth" in the three male elephants with the herd could have been implicated but there is no mention of this



Another view of Charlie-Ed right after his capture. "Spot" Griffin is on the elephant's left holding one ear, on the right is Charles "Front Door" Morgan, both well known elephant hands. Charlie-Ed had come to the show from Carl Hagenbeck in Germany in 1922 and was about six years old when he ran in Cranbrook. Alex Larson Collection.

possibility and two females, Mary and Myrtle are named as instigators in Edmonton and Cranbrook. The males Tommy and Charlie-Ed, may not have been old enough to "musth", according to Chang Reynolds.

The 1926 herd undoubtedly suffered from the loss of long time superintendent Louis Reed that spring, then the transient stewardship of Cheerful Gardner in Chicago only and Bill Emery in May, and then Jimmy Dooley taking over shortly afterwards. Robert De Lochte, the Treasurer on the 1926 S.F. Show, now living in Peru, Indiana states that the most likely factor was that inexperienced handlers allowed the stampedes to develop. C. R. Cooper<sup>6</sup> points out the dangers "when there is a sudden shift in the superintendency of the elephant line," and when "there is no time to work in a new keeper gradually as the person in command. More than once it has meant trouble not only to the circus but to the elephant." H.H. Tammen's letter in Sept. 1920, unearthed by Fred D. Pfening III<sup>9</sup>, attributes the uncontrollable rampage of Snyder I on the S.F. Show to the sudden desertion of the head bull man. In addition, traditionally the Western Canadian tours often with immigration problems, then long hauls and cool nights have reduced the quota of circus helpers to a minimum.

These important personnel factors would not be publicized but changing bosses, inexperienced handlers and shortage of helpers would seem to have been probable major causes of the stampedes. It is possible however, that other and multiple factors were involved.

Anyway, in the first few hours all but five of the bulls were rounded up. The

Cranbrook Courier reported that in the first rush of the breakaway, Dooley sustained several broken ribs and Abel, a Kootenay Indian had an exciting experience when suddenly swept from his horse by one of the runaways which charged through a thicket. Meanwhile, "the Sells-Floto company made a good name for themselves, even without the elephants" at the afternoon and evening performances which were well attended.

The circus was compelled to stay over most of Saturday in Cranbrook and Manager Zack Terrell decided to blow the Saturday stand at Fernie, B.C. The train left Sat. night Aug. 7 without the elephant car to play four Washington State and the Vancouver B.C. stands. (Wonder what it was like getting up the big top and doing all the lot and menagerie work without bulls?)

At 11:59 Aug. 7, J. Francis Guimont, C.P.R. Dispatcher, tapped out one of the most unusual train orders ever sent over the wire.

TO ALL TRAINS WEST  
KEEP LOOKOUT FOR ELEPHANTS ON TRACK ADVISING IF SIGHTED FROM FIRST TELEGRAPH OFFICE GIVING LOCATION. J.F.G.

(C.F.A. Al Candy of Lethbridge, Alberta now has the original).

Dense woods, deep ravines and steep hillsides were obstacles in the path of the searchers. Indians were engaged to help in the hunt and a reward of \$200 was offered for each successful "tracking down" of an elephant. In order to decoy the missing bulls, two docile animals, probably Trilby and Frieda, were staked out in a clearing where it was hoped they might be seen by those at large.

On Aug. 10, *Billboard* reported at Wichita, Kansas that Cheerful Gardner left the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus by airplane to join the search. The plane got as far as Denver but encountering bad flying conditions, Gardner continued the journey by rail arriving Aug. 13 in Cranbrook.



Prominent newspapers all over the country were by now carrying columns of the story on their front pages. Press dispatches from Cranbrook eventually aggregated more than 30,000 words.

The illustrious Canadian Press on a Fri. Aug. 13 dateline, presented the first very doubtful report headlined, "Courageous Squaw Captures Three Missing Jumbos". "It was due to the sagacity of an old woman, a member of a mounted party, that three of the elephants were captured. Coming unexpectedly upon the trio, the squaw detached herself from her companions and approached the elephants with an offering of apples which were quickly accepted. More apples were brought and finally the old "Kloochman" managed to tie together the front feet of one of the beasts. Some of the Indians then rode to Cranbrook to claim a reward and circus men re into town and the other two followed of their own accord. While being loaded into the freight car, one of them again bolted when a large crowd of spectators set up a roar of cheering."

At any rate, on Aug. 12 evening, the 11 bulls, including those captured, those who had been tethered in the ear since Aug. 6 and the five camels who shared the one stock car, left to rejoin the show in Seattle for the Aug. 16 stand.

The no nonsense *Cranbrook Courier*<sup>13</sup> reported that on Aug. 11 or 12, several Indians located Tillie 3½ miles from town and kept continual watch on her. Jim Dooley was able to hobble her with a chain on Aug. 15, and then she was led into town without too much difficulty. Her feet were sore and she was suffering from a bullet wound fired by an Indian woman. Tillie spent some time in the C.P.R. stockyards with her sore feet wrapped in blankets and where town boys brought her apples. Seven Indians shared the \$200 reward jointly for the reporting of the miscreant. In the meanwhile, word came from Jap Lake that there were traces of elephants possibly using the lake to drink. Cheerful Gardner assisted by Dooley, Spot Griffin, Eddie Thomas, Ralph Davis and H.B. Clark camped out nearby and the recaptured Tillie was staked out in the vicinity to act as a decoy.

The Aug. 19 *Cranbrook Herald* focused on the press coverage: "Mr. A.J. Ironside, C.P.R. Master Mechanic, who since the departure of Mr. Zack Terrell has been representing the Sells-Floto Circus in connection with the elephant hunt, wishes it stated that the reports that have been circulating in the outside press regarding the capture of the elephants are entirely erroneous. Certain reports would indicate the Indians caught Tillie who was brought into the city Sunday night. The fact is that J. Dooley, head keeper for the Sells-Floto company was the person responsible

for the capture. All that others, with the exception of the animal men, have done so far is to obtain the location of the lost animals and to direct the elephant men thereto, none of them getting within a considerable distance of any one of them so far."

In the same paper under "Wardner Notes" however, there was evidence that things were not all bad. "Many people in this district nowadays are getting quite a kick out of the elephant reports which are being published in the coast papers and those of Spokane and vicinity. However, the district is getting lots of good advertising and for some time to come, things will be dated from the time the elephants ran wild."



**Myrtle was found on September 10 in very poor condition from exposure. She died of pneumonia before she could be moved. She is shown here where she was found. Lentz Bros. Photo.**

The *Billboard* report from Seattle, Aug. 16 noted, "People here turned out in greater numbers than usual to see the Sells-Floto Circus. Daily yarns of the capture and re-capture of most of the pachyderms have kept interest alive. Whether or not the elephants took "French Leave", Arthur G. Wiseman, advance agent planted some nice little stories and they did their work." Another "shot" was reported in the Sept. 4 *Billboard* in "Under the Marquee". "From Cranbrook came a report last week, that an airplane was to arrive from Peru, Indiana with a special brand of chocolates to be used in an effort to catch the two elephants still at large after the stampede. The press agents are still making the most of the situation."

The Aug. 26 *Herald* noted that Tillie who had remained in Cranbrook since

her capture on Aug. 15 was shipped out to rejoin the show on Aug. 22. The *Herald* also carried a Spokane story, "Her sixteen vacation days over, Tillie, the 15 year old, ton and a half elephant is on her way to Eugene, Oregon, to be back on the job amusing kids and grown-ups under the big top. The truant animal, nervous but playful, arrived from Cranbrook at 9:30 over the Spokane International Railroad and was transferred over the Union Pacific in her special baggage car for the Oregon city. With the runaway were Zack Terrell, circus official, Jim Dooley, her keeper and E. Thomas and H.B. Clark, assistant keepers. Tillie has already cost more than her value to return to the fold and the bill is still growing. The ticket for Tillie from Spokane to Eugene cost \$329.27. This was paid in advance by Mr. Terrell. Dooley said his charge was perfectly peaceful now and would be in the show in a couple of days. The wound in her right leg caused by a bullet or hitting a snag, was causing some trouble, but it will heal rapidly."

The Sept. 11 *Billboard* reported that Cheerful Gardner had returned to Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus by airplane, landing in Greeley, Colorado at 10 a.m. Aug. 21. Organized Indians were scouting the dense wooded country for the two still missing bulls. "He was never able to catch sight of them from his air position from above the forest." This is the one and only sentence and mention of an air search; its authenticity is very doubtful.

News of Myrtle was confusing and contradictory from the start, and suggestive of a ploy to "break bad news gently" to avoid possible public criticism.

The Sept. 2 *Herald* gave the first news, "Myrtle, located near the Gold Creek Road and the Worden Ranch, is obviously the worse for her experiences in the Kootenai jungles. For the past two or three days, trainers have been risking their lives in their attempts to coax Myrtle into something resembling docility. There is still a possibility that with cooler nights, Myrtle and Charle Ed will not leave the wilderness alive."

On Sept. 4, the Calgary Albertan reporter wired from Cranbrook, "in good physical condition after a month foraging for herself in the mountain wilds of southern British Columbia, Myrtle was believed to be lurking this evening in a heavily wooded section 6 miles south of Cranbrook, which has been surrounded by a band of searchers. Myrtle's whereabouts were discovered Sept. 2 by Abel an Indian tracker who had followed her trail for several days from a point where she fell down a 40 foot precipice, her descent being broken by trees whose heavy branches were snapped off under her weight. Abel, attempted to attach a rope to a chain which was still



around the animals neck. Enraged by the Indian's attempts, Myrtle whose freedom has left her temper fiercer than ever, immediately charged at her would-be captor and he was forced to flee for his life. With the animal definitely located however, it is expected that she will give considerable difficulty in getting her trussed up for the return trip to captivity. A large band of men, including newspaper photographers and reporters are reamining at the scene in anticipation of her early capture."

into her. She is in an extremely exhausted condition and in great pain." Later, "Riding hurriedly back to town at 5 p.m., one of the circus men brought the news of Myrtle having died shortly after noon."

Dave Kay, Cranbrook Historian<sup>13</sup> in an interview with the C.P.R. Dispatcher Francis Guimont, probably tells it nearest to the truth. "When Myrtle was captured she had sore feet, a bullet wound in the hip, she had become dangerous; she developed pneumonia and it became necessary to

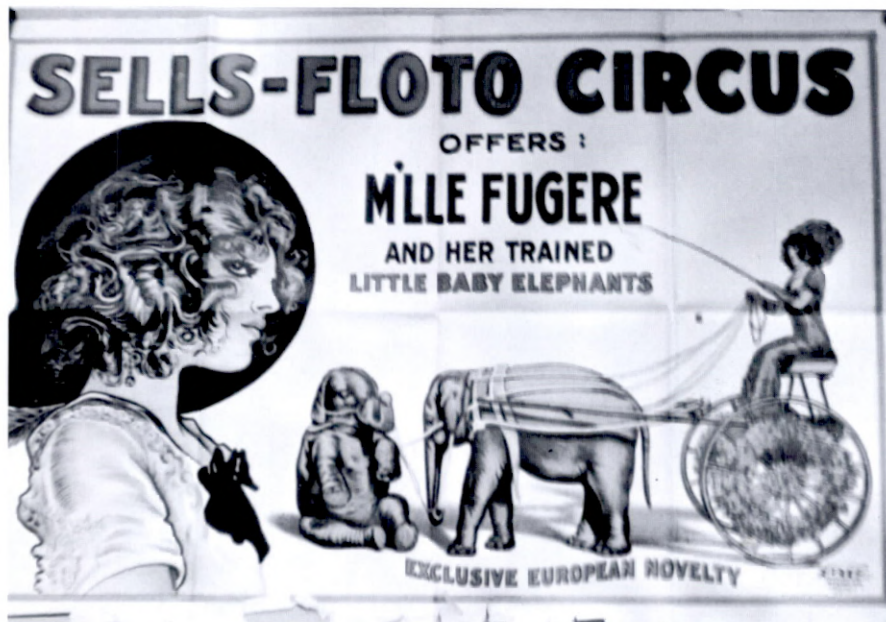
recognized trainer Morgan's voice, "whimpered a little and showing signs of friendliness was coaxed along the road." Charlie Ed was somewhat more frisky than was anticipated and before they could get him properly chained, Morgan had his shoulder hurt and Griffin was injured in the ribs. Charlie was brought to Cranbrook on Sept. 15 and "through the courtesy of Mr. Orville Stewart, S.F. Assistant Manager, will be shown at the Cranbrook Fall Fair Sept. 16 to 18."

The Sept. 16 *Herald* noted, "The Gyro Club contracted with the Conklin and Garrett All Canadian Shows to be in town for the fall fair. Charlie Ed is on exhibition at the fair."

Later the *Herald* reported, "On Sunday Sept. 19, after a big breakfast at the Arena rink in which he was quartered during his stay in Cranbrook, Charlie Ed was led across to the Royal Bank where finding Manager Marsh at home, they obtained permission to use the front of the bank's premises for the big event of the elephant's career - his christening. About 8:30 in the presence of a number of citizens, Mayor Roberts poured a bottle of champagne over his head, declaring his name to be henceforth "Cranbrook E". Then the Mayor was asked to present a \$200 wardrobe cheque to Marie Paterson, the winner of a Gyro Club contest. The Mayor was handing flowers in his most gracious manner to Miss Paterson when the newly christened grabbed the flowers and making a pass with them to his mouth, as if to eat them, thought better of it, waved the bouquet on high and then dropped it at the feet of the young lady, much to the surprise and delight of all. She picked them up thanking Cranbrook Ed and the Mayor. Next stop was at the Victoria Cafe where he quickly downed a tray of delicacies, then proceeded to the C.P.R. Depot where Mr. Ironside purchased a ticket for him, writing a cheque for \$1200. For this Cranbrook Ed got a whole baggage car for himself to ride to Santa Rosa, California where the Circus was booked for a Sept. 23 stand."

P.W. Luce in his "Odd Angle" column in the *Vancouver Province* explained the events in more detail. "The christening took place on main street with Mayor T.M. Roberts officiating from a safe distance, in the presence of an admiring crowd which respectfully refrained from pressing too close. The general impression seemed to be that this was the biggest baby ever christened in Cranbrook but it must be remembered that Charlie Ed was four years old at the time he became Cranbrook Ed. This is younger for an elephant than for the average baby, as several mothers of small families pointed out, when invidious comparisons were made.

"As a rule elephants are Baptists. They are subject to total immersion at



A Sept. 8 dispatch for nearby Fernie stated, "Word received here from Cranbrook yesterday states that efforts to catch the two elephants will be increased, Curley Stewart and Frank Morgan, expert elephant men left Oakland Sept. 5 for Cranbrook. They are bringing with them an elephant gun and traps and on their arrival will make the decision as to possible capture or destruction of Myrtle."

On Sept. 10, the Calgary Albertan reporter in Cranbrook wrote, "Cranbrook is in mourning today on account of the death of Myrtle, recaptured Sept. 8. Circus men say the death of the animal was due to pneumonia which it is understood they contract quite easily, and with the nights now bordering on the frost line in this altitude, would include. The elephant was in quite poor condition when found, and nothing that the circus men could do was of avail."

The Sept. 9 *Cranbrook Courier* gave a different report, "Myrtle, located by Indians at the base of Moyie Mountain is reported to be a physical wreck; all her toenails are worn off, her knees terribly bruised and two or three bullet wounds in her hip. It is thought that Indians, panicked by being charged several days ago, fired several shots

Two of the baby elephants that came over in 1922 were featured on this poster used during the 1926 season. The special lithograph was designed by Erie Pfening Collection.

destroy her. Francis owned the most powerful rifle in town, but at the last moment events made a change necessary and to Francis Guimont's relief another was chosen to squeeze the trigger."

The head and left front leg were brought out of the forest on pack horses and presented to Dr. William Rowan, founder of the University of Alberta's Dept. of Zoology in Edmonton, Alberta. Jim Ironside, a circus fan in Cranbrook reported that Jerry Mugivan, as a gift paid the \$47 shipping charges. Also in July 1927, Prof. Rowan and students came to Cranbrook to collect the remaining bones, "but it was discovered that grizzlies had torn the body to pieces and carted it off. Not a bone or trace of Myrtle was found."<sup>14</sup>

Charlie Ed, the last of the runaways, was captured on the morning of Sept. 14 at Smith Lake, near Lumberton about five miles west of Cranbrook by Spot Griffin and Charlie Morgan. According to the *Herald*, the elephant



their christening but Mayor Roberts had some doubts as to his ability to push the pachyderm under water against his will. Anyway as there seemed to be some difficulty in setting up a tank large enough for the job in the middle of the main street, Charlie Ed obligingly abandoned the faith of his fathers for the time being.

"Godparents were Spot Griffin and Charles Morgan of the Sells-Floto organization and they were emphatic in their assurance their charge would be a model of perfect behavior all the days of his life. Mr. Griffin was becomingly dressed in splints from the right shoulder down, while Mr. Morgan had a number of ribs in an attractive plaster cast, these being outward and visible signs of gentle caresses received when the stray elephant welcomed them in his field of alfalfa.

"As is usual, this baby didn't know what was going to happen to him, but was sure he wasn't going to like it one little bit. He bawled, and for blocks round, windows and teeth rattled. However his experienced guardians quieted him down with a gentle rocking - one good sized rock at a time on the flanks.

"Cranbrook is a dry town but the Mayor is a forehanded gentleman. Ever since 1916, he held in reserve a quart bottle of champagne so as to be ready to christen an elephant on Main Street whenever called upon. He had also spent some weary nights looking up authorities on ceremonies of this nature, so he was quite prepared to argue the point when it was proposed that he should straddle the elephant's neck and crack the bottle over his skull, and at the same time explaining to Cranbrook Ed that there was no malice in his method. Mayor Roberts style though decidedly novel in christenings, is strongly recommended to all public men who may have to officiate under similar conditions. The chief magistrate stood afar off on one foot, whirled the bottle around his head three times, shouted "Atta boy, Cranbrook Ed" in a loud voice, then let drive with an unerring aim. It was the most sizzling hit ever seen in the Kootenays and the home run that followed broke all records and several gates. "I have been practicing throwing at the side of a barn for a week" said the Mayor later, when he had got his second wind and "I was sure I could not miss an elephant. The only question was whether the elephant would miss me."

"The gifts of the godparents to the baby consisted of an elegant pair of wrought iron ankle bracelets weighing one hundred pounds and a steel goad guaranteed to tickle through the toughest hide."

Including the loss of Myrtle, Jim Ironside estimated that the stampede cost the circus about \$10,000. All bills were promptly paid by Zack Terrell:



More than 50 years after the Cranbrook stampede, the skull and lower jaw of Myrtle are used for teaching and research in the Prof. William Rowan's Vertebrate Collection in the Department of Zoology, University of Alberta, Edmonton. Author's Photo.

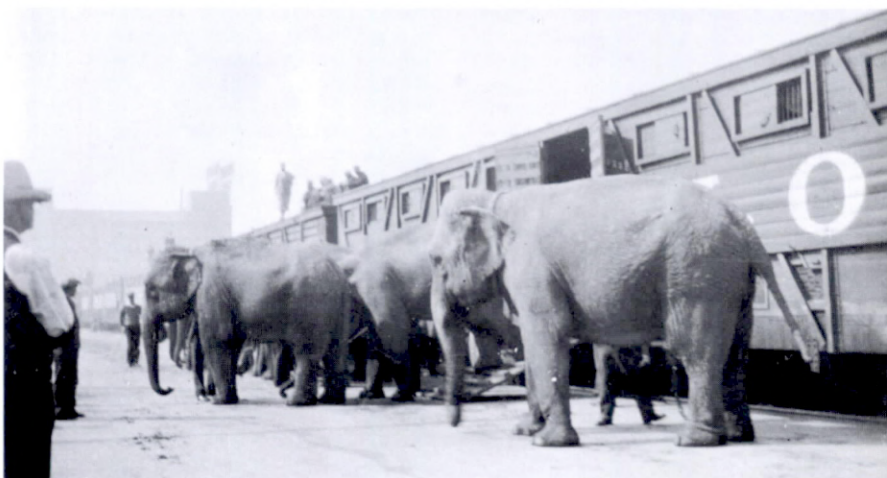
"His generalship in handling this unusual situation made circus history."

What happened to those 1926 bulls later?

#### TRILBY

Herd leader from about 1920 through 1932. With Frieda completed the full span of years of the circus, from the Otto Floto Dog and Pony Show in 1902

Part of the Sells-Floto Circus elephant herd is shown being unloaded during the 1926 season. Pfening Collection.



to the closing of the Sells Floto Circus after the 1932 season. Shipped to the Al G. Barnes Circus<sup>18</sup> in Jan. 1933. Was the tallest elephant of 60 circus bulls at 8 feet, 4 inches on the 1935 Benedict survey.<sup>19</sup> Joined RB-B&B in 1948.

#### FRIEDA

Sub-queen of herd throughout about 1920 to S.F. closing after 1932 season. With Trilby, was on the Floto-Sells Floto shows from their beginning to end. Sent to Al G. Barnes Circus probably in winter of 1934-35 off Hagenbeck-Wallace.<sup>20</sup> Went into Sarasota Ringling Quarters at end of 1938 Barnes-RB-B&B tour.<sup>19</sup> Frank Buck bought her from RB-B&B in early 1939 and took her to the New York World's Fair. Subsequently he donated her to the Cleveland Zoo on Nov. 30, 1940, where she was known as Sells-Floto Frieda.<sup>21</sup> Destroyed at the zoo Nov. 17, 1956 after a cerebral hemorrhage.

#### BIG TILLIE

Still with S.F. in 1930; worked in the center ring with Snyder, Kas, Charlie Ed and Josky.<sup>22</sup> She died of poisoning on Ringling in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1941.

#### KAS

With S.F. until show closed; joined Al G. Barnes<sup>18</sup> in Jan. 1933. To Ringling Quarters at end of 1938 season.<sup>19</sup> Died in the RB-B&B menagerie fire in Cleveland<sup>8</sup> in 1942.

#### MO

Died on S.F. during the 1928 Chicago Coliseum date.<sup>8</sup>

#### SNYDER II

Value established at \$5,000 in 1927, when W.H. Woodcock, then employed by W.P. Hall inquired about purchasing him.<sup>9</sup> In 1930, the big male had been "bulling" for a few days when S.F. went into Peru quarters, and became unmanageable. Not taken out in 1931, he remained heavily chained. By August 31, no one could venture near; Jess Adkins gave the order, after consultation with John Ringling, for him to be shot on Aug. 26.

#### VIRGINIA

In 1928, sold off S.F. to E.E. Coleman



Shows. In April 1931, now owned by W. P. Hall, leased to Fred Buchanan for Robbins Bros. Circus which folded ingloriously in Sept. 1931; returned to Lancaster.<sup>23</sup> In Sept. 1933, C.E. Webb (Russell Bros. Circus) purchased her from Hall; she went bad and overturned the ticket wagon and was shipped back to Hall.<sup>24</sup> Bill Woodcock and Spencer Huntley had renamed her "Virginia." In 1942 owned by Spencer Huntley, who again changed her name to Burma. In 1944 Jack Mills purchased his most prized possession the large elephant Burma; he renamed her Big Burma. She became the great stalwart on Mills Bros. Circus, practically unloading the canvas herself each morning and performing well in the ring. Jack was justifiably very proud on Jan. 20/53 when Burma appeared in the inaugural parade in Washington D.C. honoring President Eisenhower.<sup>25</sup> Following closure of the Mills show in 1966, Burma was sold to a Mexican circus.

#### MARY

After a long very hot run from Spokane to Lewiston, Idaho, in 1928 five S.F. bulls broke away as they were being unloaded. Four were caught in short order but Mary was berserk and butted her head through shop windows. She charged into Woolworth's smashing everything in her path; the girls ran out screaming. Outside again, she picked up a motorcycle and smashed it to the ground. Zack Terrell and the sheriff agreed that she might kill someone; he brought her down with the first bullet.<sup>26</sup>

#### TONY

In 1930, on S.F. worked with Trilby and Frieda in the big elephant act in Ring One.<sup>22</sup> Same route as Trilby subsequently; with RB-B&B in 1948.<sup>19</sup>

#### BESSIE

After her last season on S.F. in 1929, was on John Robinson in 1930.<sup>22</sup>

#### BABE

This bull was referred to as "Cross Country Babe" in a Col. W.H. Woodcock Sr. letter dated 1929. She was transferred to the John Robinson Circus in 1929. In 1967, a bull called Cross Country Babe was owned by Gene Holter.<sup>12</sup> Many bulls had this name, making it difficult to follow their careers.

#### CHARLIE ED

With S.F. through 1932, then with Hagenbeck-Wallace herd<sup>15</sup> of 31 bulls in 1933. To Al G. Barnes Quarters after H.W. closed in 1934. Joined Tommy, Prince and Joe, four tough males in Los Angeles to make movie "Clive of India".<sup>8</sup> "The winter was a picnic for the bulls but one long headache for the handlers". In March 1936 presented to Fleishbacker Zoo, San Francisco and renamed Wally. On June 16/38, turned on his keeper Edward Brown and "shook him to death".<sup>27</sup> Shot June 18, 1938.

#### TOMMY

After 1928 season, transferred to Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1929, John Robinson in 1930 where he was only male,<sup>8</sup> back to H.W. in 1933. With Charlie Ed for "Clive for India" in 1934-35. In June 1935, sent back to Peru, heavily chained. Was to have been executed in Peru. In the winter of 1938-39, a female bull called Tommy was sold off Cole Bros. to the San Diego Zoo. This Tommy used to work with

Sells-Floto Virginia was owned by Spencer Huntley in the late 1930's. She is shown here with trainer William Woodcock and Mrs. Babe Woodcock. Pfening Collection.



Ding and Boo, and finally died at the Los Angeles Zoo.

#### MYRTLE

Although dead for 50 years, old Myrtle is not forgotten as in Edmonton, she still answers an annual "curtain call". Myrtle's skull, lower jaw and left front foot are examined every fall by each new class of zoology students at the University of Alberta.

Special thanks are due David Kay, Cranbrook historian for his columns and help in contacting Cranbrook residents who witnessed the stampede; to Bob Parkinson, Librarian at the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin, for the use of the 1926 *BILLBOARDS* and his review of the manuscripts and to Dr. Vic Lewin, Dept. of Zoology, University of Alberta, for the opportunity to borrow, some of, Myrtle.

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- 6a as above page 256
- 6b as above page 228
- 6c as above page 225
- 7 Under The Big Top C.R. Cooper, Little, Brown and Co., Boston 1923, p 113
- 8 Sells Floto Circus 1929 J.T. Bradbury, White Tops Vol. 48, 6, Nov.-Dec. 1975
- 8a Sells Floto Circus 1924 Chang Reynolds, Bandwagon, Vol. 8, 2, March-April 1964
- 9 Story of the Two Snyders Fred D. Pfening III, Bandwagon Vol. 11, 5, Sept.-Oct. 1967
- 10 William P. Hall Fred D. Pfening III, Bandwagon Vol. 10, 6 Nov.-Dec. 1966
- 11 Billy Sunday Eugene Whitmore, White Tops Vol. 47, 5, Sept.-Oct. 1974
- 12 Rhoda Royal Elephants Homer C. Walton, Bandwagon Vol. 11, 1 Jan.-Feb. 1967
- 13 Come With Me To Yesterday Columns Dave Kay, Cranbrook Courier, Cranbrook, B.C.
- 14 Cranbrook Elephant Stampede A.J. Ironside, White Tops Vol. 8, 2-3 Dec. 34-Jan. 35
- 15 Famous Elephant Stampedes C.E. Davis, White Tops Vol. 17, 7-8 June-July 1944
- 16 Circus Goes to Canada F.H. Phillips, White Tops Vol. 10, 4-5 Feb.-Mar. 1937
- 17 Fun By The Ton Edward Allen & F.B. Kelley Hastings House, New York 1941
- 18 Elephants Whit Tops, Vol. 6, 10 Feb. 1933, p. 3
- 19 Ringling Elephants Chang Reynolds, Bandwagon Vol. 12, 5 Sept.-Oct. 1968
- 20 Al G. Barnes 1936 J.T. Bradbury, White Tops Vol. 44, 6 Nov.-Dec. 1971
- 21 Cleveland Zoo Elephants Letter of Ronald Reuther, dated Nov. 20/61 forwarded by Leonard J. Goss, Director, Cleveland Zoo, April 2, 1975
- 22 John Ringling's Circus Empire J.T. Bradbury, White Tops Vol. 46, 6 Nov.-Dec. 1973
- 23 Papers of W.P. Hall, Tom Parkinson for the CWM, Baraboo, Bandwagon Vol. 17, 4 July-Aug. 1973
- 24 Russell Bros. Circus, Stuart Thayer, Bandwagon Vol. 13, 2 March-April 1969
- 25 Jack Mills Fred D. Pfening Jr. Bandwagon Vol. 18, 4 July-Aug. 1974
- 26 Stampede Frank Mara Bannerline #676 Aug. 15, 1975
- 27 Charlie Ed Killed His Keeper White Tops Vol. 9, 8-9 June-July 1936
- 28 Cole Bros. Circus 1939 J.T. Bradbury Bandwagon Vol. 11, 3 May-June 1967



# 30th Convention of The Circus Historical Society

The 1977 convention of the Circus Historical Society, held in Sarasota, Florida, February 3 to 5, was as large and successful as any in the organization's history. The 112 members and guests attending the event will attest to a full three days, involving a variety of activities, in a number of circus oriented locations in the former winter quarters city.

Those arriving a day early were welcomed by signs at each motel advising that a bonus event was scheduled on February 2, with a meeting of the local CFA tent that night at the club house of the Showfolks of Sarasota. Arrows on street poles pointed the way, circus style, to Showfolks, for those unfamiliar with the location. The signs and arrows were but one of many touches provided by the energetic and thorough convention chairman Cliff Glotzbach. Artist Ray Dirgo lettered the signs and was aided in putting them up by Beatty-Cole 24 hour man Bob Gray. Those on hand ahead of the convention who did not go to the CFA meeting took in the final performance of the Ringling Barnum Blue unit in Venice, before the show moved on to its second stand in Lakeland, Florida.

Cliff Glotzbach found his job growing larger as the dates approached. Original plans called for an average turnout of perhaps 35 people. After he had received over 100 advance reservations he had to begin planning all over again. The original meeting locations were just not big enough to handle the larger group. Glotzbach did an outstanding job and is to be commended for it; the success of the meeting was largely attributable to his extensive efforts. Others working with Glotzbach included Dow Nida, who met those arriving at the airport, and hauled projection equipment needed for the programs, Alva Johnson who was in charge of transportation for those without cars, Nedra Gonzales who aided with the registration and provided general help and Bill and

Lucille Lane who were in charge of the chicken dinners served as the Thursday evening meal on February 3.

On February 3 members registered in the meeting room of the beautiful new exhibits building of the Ringling Museum of the Circus. CHS Secretary-Treasurer Ed Jones and his wife Jean, handled the incoming conventioners, assisted by Nedra Gonzales and Dow Nida. At 2 p.m. the first business meeting of the Circus Historical Society since 1971 was called to order by President Stuart Thayer in the club house of the Showfolks of Sarasota. It was necessary to move the meeting to that facility because of its size and the Showfolks were gracious enough to allow its use. Treasurer Jones presented an unaudited financial report. BANDWAGON editor Fred D. Pfening, Jr., gave a report on the magazine, outlining upcoming articles and pointing out the increased cost of printing and mailing. Dr. Roland Gibbs asked for support for his work on the endangered species bills that are anticipated in this session of Congress. He was appointed CHS representative in the effort to support the continued use of wild animals in circus work. Gibbs, as chairman of the CFA's endangered species committee, has spearheaded support from the various circus fan groups.

Following the business meeting CHS Director Ed Cripps, of Brantford, Ontario, provided an exciting film made by the National Film Board of Canada, "High Grass Circus." This movie proved to be the finest professional circus film produced in recent years. The film was taken on CHS member Al Stencell's Royal Bros. Circus during the 1975 season, while

**All of the CHS members and guests assembled in the grandstand of the George Hanneford Family Circus bigtop, in the Circus Hall of Fame, for this group picture following the performance on February 4, 1977. All convention photos by Cliff Glotzbach.**

the show was co-owned by John Frazier. The problems and joys of operating a small truck circus were well documented, showing Stencell coping with the business side and Frazier getting it up and down in sun and rain. One scene of Johnny Frazier "squaring" the show that had been set up on the wrong lot was priceless, as he conversed with a policeman.

J. R. Whyte, of the Circus Hall of Fame, gave a talk on his work in restoration of material and the up-grading of exhibits.

The group remained at the Showfolks for a chicken dinner that was followed by the President's reception. Later that evening Richard Flint presented a multiple-screen slide program of advertising material to trace the history of the circus in America. A number of rare lithographs were shown as part of the presentation.

At noon on February 4, the CHS members were guests at a luncheon at the Ringling Museum of the Circus, hosted by Richard Carroll, Director of Museums and John Hurdle, Curator of the Circus Museum. The guests were seated at tables used in the cookhouse of the Ringling-Barnum Circus. Joe McKennon pointed out that the tents used for the luncheon had been discovered in the Ringling mansion and had been made in the middle 1920s for Mable Ringling's lawn parties. This was their first use. John J. Lentz, Mrs. Richard Carroll and Mrs. Marian McKennon assisted.

Simultaneous with this luncheon, a ladies' luncheon was held at the Ramada Inn. Jean Jones and Nedra Gonzales were co-hostesses for this event, which was attended by one man (while his wife, the card carrying member of the family attended the cookhouse luncheon hosted by the Ringling Museum.) Twenty-eight women attended this affair which had a clown motif and table prizes of George and Martha Washington dolls.

Following the two luncheons







Richard Carroll, Ringling Museum host is shown at far left at one of the dining tables from the Ringling-Barnum Circus. Seated next to him are Mrs. Carroll and John Hurdle. Al Conover and Steve Sullivan are shown at the table on the right.



CHS Secretary-Treasurer Ed Jones is shown at right during the Saturday night banquet held at the Showfolks of Sarasota. On his left is Mrs. Jean Jones and Dow Nida.

members and guests joined to attend the 3 p.m. performance of the Hanneford Family Circus, in the big top set up in the center of the Circus Hall of Fame. Host Herb Garrido, general manager of the Circus Hall of Fame, announced the 1977 additions to the Circus Hall of Fame, as selected the day before by the National Awards Committee.

Friday evening did not have a scheduled event, however arrangements were made at the Old Heidelberg Castle, a German restaurant, for the conventioners to occupy the terrace over looking the festivities. About 75 people took advantage of the reserved area to watch the Rodos and listen to the Tyrolian orchestra.

On Saturday February 5, the group were guests of Bill Lee, director of the Sarasota High School Sailor Circus, and his wife Barbara, at the regular Saturday practice session in the Sailor Circus bigtop.

The CHS convention banquet was held in connection with the monthly social of the Showfolks of Sarasota. The first Saturday of each February is the birthday celebration of Showfolks past president Karl Wallenda. Karl cooked the steaks on an open fire and with the CHS members and guests on hand this year over 300 were in attendance. In honor of the occasion Cliff Glotzbach had designed a most unique piece of modern art. He commissioned an artist-welder to make the reproduction of Karl Wallenda doing a headstand on the high wire, in brass. The art piece was presented to Karl Wallenda by CHS President Stuart Thayer following the dinner. Thayer then thanked the Showfolks for their kindness in allowing the CHS to use the club facilities during its convention and presented Charlie Nixon, Showfolks President, with a check from the CHS to apply to the Showfolks building fund. In addition to the special art trophy given Wallenda by the Circus Historical Society, a giant birthday card signed by all who gave the present, was given to the famous circus artist.

Karl Wallenda acknowledged the gift and commented on his wire walk between two hotels in Miami Beach.

Following the short program various Showfolks members presented a series of circus acts as a floor show. Dancing and socializing

capped a very pleasant evening. This final event allowed the CHS group to mix and visit with the many active and retired circus personalities living in the Sarasota area.

This was the first three-day convention since 1971. The many circus sites in Sarasota together with the general attraction of warm Florida in February brought the largest number of people ever to attend a national convention of the Circus Historical Society. All attending acknowledged that the program had been superbly planned and executed by the hard working



Karl Wallenda holds the modern art trophy designed by Cliff Glotzbach, and presented to Wallenda by the Circus Historical Society during the 1977 banquet.

chairman Cliff Glotzbach. Glotzbach was presented with a gift by the CHS in appreciation of his job well done.

The following members and guests attended the 1977 Sarasota convention of The Circus Historical Society:

E. T. Adams, Westbrook, Ct.; Mr. and Mrs. Jack Anderson, Jacksonville, Fla.; Larry Baggett, Salem, Ore.; John (Doc) Boyle, Baraboo, Wis.; Mr. & Mrs. Herman Brandmiller, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Broom, Hickory, N.C.; Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Brown, Jacksonville, Fla.; Paul Butler, Brantford, Ont.; Walter Basalyga, Miami, Fla.; Hovey Burgess.

Mr. & Mrs. David Carpenter, Port Huron, Mich.; Al Conover, Xenia, Ohio; Cliff Crawford, Port Moody, B.C.; Ed Cripps, Brantford, Ont.

Freddie Daw, Coral Gables, Fla.; Ms. Judith Daykin, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Oscar Decker, Newburg, N.Y.; Ray Dirgo, Bridgeport, Ct.; Robert Doak, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Harold Dunn,

Sarasota, Fla.; James Elliott, Mason, Mich.

Richard Flint, Rochester, N.Y.; Mr. & Mrs. Harold Flint, Fargo, N.D.; Mr. & Mrs. C. P. Fox, Winter Park, Fla.; Herbert Frierson, Birmingham, Ala.; Dr. Roland Gibbs, Glenwood, Iowa; Cliff Glotzbach, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Charles Gonzales, Sarasota, Fla.; Bob Gray, Sarasota, Fla.; Rev. & Mrs. Robert Grover, Endwell, N.Y.

Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Hartman, San Antonio, Texas; Ralph Henderson, Spokane, Wash.; Ms. Rosalie Hoffman, Chicago, Ill.; Dr. & Mrs. Robert Hoppe, Villanova, Pa.; John Hurdle, Sarasota, Fla.

Alva Johnson, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Edward Jones, Zanesville, Ohio; Miss Joanne Joys, Mrs. Joys, Toledo, Ohio; Dean Jensen, Milwaukee, Wis.

Benjamin Kronberger, Cleveland, Ohio; Harry Labrie, Gatlinburg, Tenn.; Mr. & Mrs. Bill Lane, College Park, Ga.; Mr. & Mrs. Howard Leech, Tampa, Fla.; Ms. Bette Leonard, Wichita, Kan.; Mr. & Mrs. John Lentz, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Leo Lindgren, Bradenton, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Bob Langden, Sarasota, Fla.

Don McGarry, Washington, D.C.; Mr. & Mrs. Joe McKennon, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Barclay McKeough, Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Miller, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. H. T. Munson, Wakefield, R.I.; Mr. & Mrs. William Myers, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Mary McDonough, Sarasota, Fla.; Dow Nida, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. John VanMatre, Winter Haven, Fla.

Bill Parrish, St. Augustine, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Bob Parkinson, Baraboo, Wis.; Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Fred D. Pfening III, Columbus, Ohio; Mr. & Mrs. C. A. Pitchford, Jacksonville, Fla.; Gene Plowden, Miami, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. George Porter, Sarasota, Fla.; William Palmer.

Ms. Carol Rodkey, Cleveland, Ohio; Mr. & Mrs. Earl Schmid, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Mr. & Mrs. Walter Searfoss, Kissimmee, Fla.; Robert Senhauser, Sarasota, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Charles Simmons, Chicago, Ill.; Art Spellman, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Don Smith, Detroit Mich.; Steven Sullivan, Attleboro, Mass.; Keith Smith, Anna Maria, Fla.; Stuart Thayer, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Jack Staggs, Bradenton, Fla.; William L. Schultz, Baraboo, Wis.

Henry Van Loon, Ruskin, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. Eric Wilson, Iowa City, Iowa; Ross Wandrey, Houston, Texas; John Wyatt, Tampa, Fla.; Mr. & Mrs. John Zweifel, Orland, Fla.



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